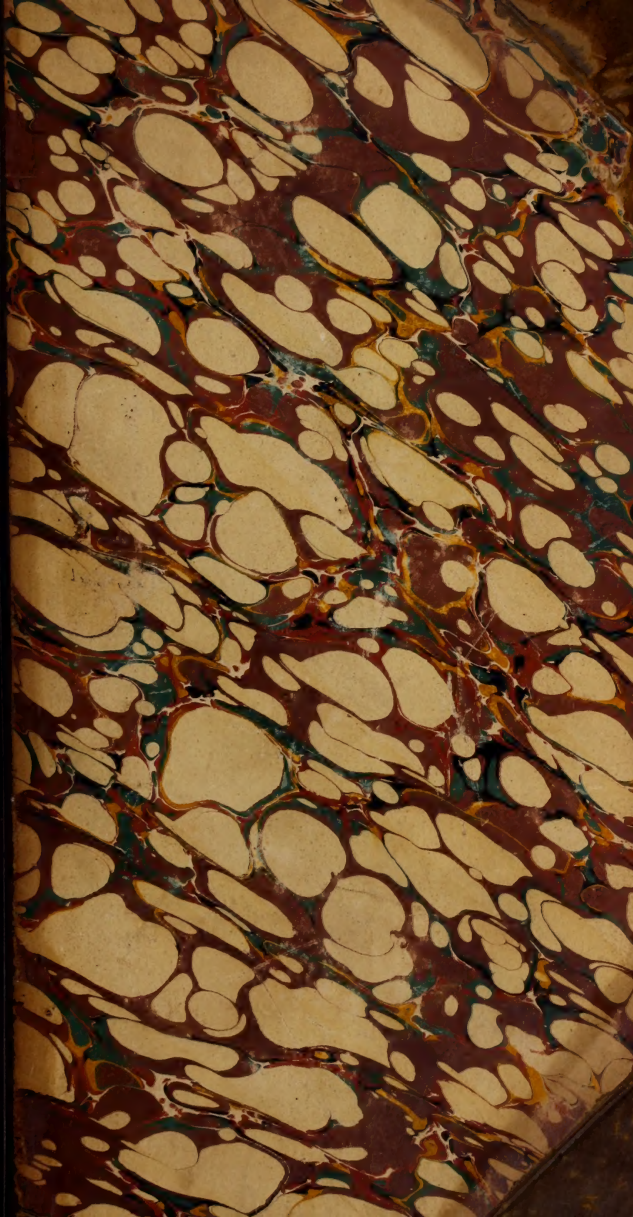

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THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.

LATE VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D.

MINISTER OF STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

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THREE LETTERS

TO A

BARRISTER,

IN ANSWER TO HIS HINTS TO THE PUBLIC AND THE LEGISLATURE.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PREFACE.

An interval of many months having elapsed since the last blow which I gave the Barrister; and concluding that he feels both sore and tired in his fruitless attempt to make either the public or the legislature in love with his heresy; I have conceived that it might not be unacceptable to the truly orthodox, to present them with a general view of the subject which gave rise to the controversy; and by giving a brief analysis of both sides of the dispute, save a vast expense of time and labour in the perusal of the whole publications.

In the opening of the year 1808, a most virulent, and until then unheard of attack, was made upon the whole body of evangelical divinity, by an anonymous writer, under the signature of a Barrister; in which, without the least modesty or reserve, the peculations of the dishonest, and the outrages committed on society by the abandoned, were put down to the account of evangelical preaching. In addition to those *general* charges, the Barrister amused the wantonness of his mind, with *particular* attacks on certain characters. And, as if determined to make the cross of Christ odious in the view of every beholder, the great drift of his publication was directed to rouse the indignation of the public and legislature against evangelical preaching, by openly declaring that if such characters as preached the doctrine of grace, were permitted to go on with impunity, the nation must ultimately fall a sacrifice to fanaticism.

The *first* letter in this volume was sent forth in answer immediately, upon the appearance of those Hints of the Barrister. And although the disadvantages were very great in contending with one in disguise, yet taking up the argument of defence upon the general ground, there seemed to be nothing more necessary than to state the foundation on which evangelical preaching rests, namely, upon the scriptures, and the authority of the legislature, to silence clamours of infidelity.

Some considerable space took place before the Barrister made reply; when a *second* part of Hints issued from the press, indicating the sad anger of a disappointed mind. But as the loss of temper only shews the weakness of a cause, my object was to follow up the ground I had gained in the prosecution of the path of fair reasoning and inquiry, by shewing on which side truth stood. Indeed, as the Barrister from the heat of contest during his *second* part of attack, dropped the mask, and stood forth the open and avowed Unitarian, I availed myself of the discovery, and addressed him under that character. I therefore sent forth a *second* letter, (which stands the second in this collection,) in which also, as the Barrister had sadly committed himself on certain points of doctrine, and manifested his total ignorance in the classics, I ventured in a gentle, but pointed manner, to call his attention to those subjects; and in conclusion, requested his most serious attention to the miserable end to which such errors as he appeared the advocate for, must eventually lead.

It should seem that the gentleness of my style did not altogether lose its effect on the Barrister's mind; for in his *third* part, which followed my *second* letter, he professed a sorrow if he had committed himself in saying any thing of a personal nature that was offensive to me.—The *third*, and last letter in this volume, contains my answer. And here the subject rests. And here I venture to conclude it will rest. For the public have long since been tired; and as for the legislature, to be sure nothing of such trash can ever have excited their regard. For my own part, I should long since have withdrawn from the puerile attack, but as the Barrister had, in his first onset, declared that he would bring forth to the public odium, the nature and effects of evangelical preaching, in all its bearings, I then pledged myself to follow him through all his writings—to watch over his fallacy. This I have now done, and very cheerfully leave the event to the re-hearing at that bar, where truth must and shall ultimately prevail.

The letter to my esteemed antagonist, Mr. HALE, on another subject, is here added, as being the only controversial piece of mine which remains in print.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
Jan. 1, 1810

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

LETTER I.

I KNOW not to whom I have to make my acknowledgments, for that sort of honour conferred upon me in the pamphlet, entitled, "Hints to the Public, and Legislature, on the Nature and Effect of Evangelical Preaching." But, to whomsoever this tribute is due, I certainly would lose no time in expressing a proper sense of the obligations you have laid me under, and of giving in the answer which is so imperiously demanded from me.

There is, I confess, an awkwardness in addressing one that is unknown; and this is but the more sensibly felt, when writing on the defensive. Some author, (no matter whom,) hath very justly observed, that an anonymous pamphleteer, in attempting to injure the reputation of another, hath a double motive for concealment. He is conscious that his cause, as well as his name, are both alike indefensible. Whether this applies to you, or not, may be left with you to determine. For my own part, I have laboured too long, and too earnestly, in what I know to be the best of all possible causes, even the cause of God, and his truth, not to know also, that such labours, and such earnestness, cannot fail to call forth resentment from men of your principles. I consider this however, but as a toll, which all the faithful labourers in the gospel are obliged to pay, when they "speak with their enemies in the gate."

But though I know not *to* whom I write, yet I well know *for* whom I write. In such a service I feel a confidence too firmly grounded, to shrink from abuse.

I should pity indeed the man who suffered even his haste to be impeded, on an errand of mercy, and much more if he lost his temper, because some angry looker on threw dirt at him as he passed.

You sadly deceive yourself, Sir, if you fancy that any thing contained in your pamphlet, hath provoked my displeasure. There is in my view of it, much more to excite pity, than anger. And as far as it relates personally to me, I can assure you, that I have been but too much accustomed to such common place observations, to be at all moved by them. Indeed, there is nothing new in them to do it. What you have said in your condemnation of evangelical preaching, hath been already said an hundred times before you. And for the poor and feeble part I bear in the honourable service of a preacher of these divine truths, the abuse of such a thing as me, I ought to consider as a matter not a little satisfactory. The Porters, and the Polwheles,* and the whole hue and cry of the anti-jacobinical, and anti-christian reviewers, long since run me down, and run over me. And, Sir, they would have told you, had you consulted their writings, that as far as the abuse of the tongue and pen could go, they had anticipated your labours. They did the same as you have now done. They poured forth a full heaped measure of censures upon me, and in a way best suited to their mind and manners to bestow. And I did by them, as I shall now do by you. Like the "Man of Uz," when "mine adversary hath written a book, I shall take it upon my shoulder," as he did, and "bind it as a crown to me."

Had your pamphlet therefore been directed to the aspersion of my character only, without regard to the doctrines I profess, you would have been spared this letter. Libels of every kind, in my esteem, are best

* See the attack on my sermons, upon the divinity of Christ, by Mr. Porter, the late Unitarian teacher, at Plymouth. See also Mr. Polwhele's letter on my preaching and writings.

treated by silence. And libels which come from anonymous authors, certainly can have no higher pretensions, than to contempt. The general tenor of a man's life, is the truest refutation of all such calumny. And allow me, Sir, to add, had you condescended to have made inquiry concerning the person, whose character and writings you make so free with, before that you sent forth into the world your judgment and sentence for execution upon both, perhaps you might have found cause to have stopped the warrant.

It will not, I hope, be considered either unsuitable or unbecoming in me, (indeed it ought not, upon an occasion like the present,) if I contend for an honourable distinction of character, equal with my censor, be who he may, in all the departments of moral, civil, and social life. And the jurors of my conduct, he himself shall impannel. You shall gather them, Sir, if you please, from the common mass of all that know me. Neither will I challenge the restriction of them to such as have similar views of religion to myself; but let the whole, if you wish it, be selected from those who differ from me in sentiments of faith, but are disposed to give full testimony to exemplary practice. In the parish where I now dwell, and where the last *thirty years* of my life have been spent, I venture to take confidence none can or will come forward to impeach a line of conduct engaged, for the most part, in the humble and peaceable, but laborious office of a parochial minister.

Is this appeal to an honourable reputation, foreign to the modesty becoming me? Is it in any degree departing from my own principles of the fallen state of man? Far, very far from it. There is a wide distinction between our views of moral rectitude, in the comparative statements of human life, as they relate to man with man; and as that rectitude appears in the divine eye. When man stands opposed to man,

at this bar of judgment, good works may, and indeed ought to be fully appreciated. But when man stands at heaven's tribunal, here " all the world must become guilty before God."

Hence, with holy men of old, we find this line of distinction, as if to mark the boundary, strictly drawn. David, in the consciousness of his own integrity in his dealings with the world, makes an appeal to God, against the unjust decisions of men. " Judge me," saith he, " O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine innocency that is in me." But when the same David comes to stand up before God, in the heart-searching trial of the soul, he deprecates divine wrath, and cries out under a conscious sense of his own vileness ; " Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

And might I venture, Sir, without the fear of giving offence, to throw in a line, by way of parenthesis, I would say it may be well worth *your* most serious consideration, whether David's conduct would not be highly suitable and becoming for you, and indeed for every man, to imitate. The unhumbled pride of the human heart, in seasons of frivolity and lightness, thinks less of this important subject than its vast consequence demands. We walk on stilts when, in the supposed idea of being better than others, we make those comparative statements, and, in the view of greater infirmities than our own, look down as from an eminence. But all these distinctions lose their very name when coming before God. We may frame to ourselves what standards we please, in our estimate, how God will be guided in his judging the world. As if a condemned malefactor, at an assize, should prescribe laws to his judge. But the unalterable unaccommodating terms, are already proclaimed. And if David's flesh trembled (as he tells us it did) in the

prospect of God's judgments, though he was approaching that judgment in a better righteousness than his own, how will those appear who seek no shelter in the way David did, but venture their everlasting welfare on the slender footing of their own goodness.

But to return from this digression. The cause, Sir, for which I address you, is not the defence of my character, but my doctrine. Your "Hints" derive all their importance with me, from the subject with which they are connected. The attack you have thought proper to make, on what I venture to call the most precious truths of the gospel, is the sole motive for which I have thought it worth while to read your pamphlet. Every other consideration with me is lost in this one. Neither shall I have respect to any other, but as it may be necessary to call it in with a view to the furtherance of this. Every thing irrelevant to the main design I wish to throw into the back ground of the controversy.

Hostile as our sentiments are, on this most interesting of all subjects; and injurious as, in my apprehension, your tenets are to the best interests of man; yet, in exposing the fallacy of your arguments, and defending what is dearer to me than life, I shall study to preserve the utmost decorum. If I err on this ground, it will not be intentionally. It is your principles, and not your person, with which I wage war. It is for truth, "even the truth as it is in Jesus," I contend. And this I am well persuaded, needs no angry weapon to be wielded in its support. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." No, Sir. As I have already told you, so once more I repeat, I have too long known, and I may add, too fully tried and proved the purity of those divine principles of our holy faith, to seek resources any where or from any thing, but in themselves by way of defending them.

When we have proved the weapons of our spiritual

armory, we may then safely take them to the battle. And when a man hath himself tasted of the bread of life, and drank of the water of life, he may freely recommend both, from a personal knowledge of their divine and salutary qualities. And however the idea may afford the momentary triumph of laughter to the infidel, I cannot resist the impulse arising in my mind to say, did you but know what I know, and enjoy what I enjoy, of the divine life in the soul, instead of the opposition which you are come forward to make, to throw down the happiness of thousands, you would rather follow the example of those, who, having searched out the promised land, and found it abounding with the choicest fruit, returned laden with the richest clusters of grapes, and figs, and pomegranates, by way of inviting others, to enter with them upon the happy country where they grew.

It is very rare, but that in subjects of controversy, and especially in religious controversy, there are, for the most part, certain points from whence the different parties set out, and in which they all agree. But in the cursory view, which I have hitherto taken of your pamphlet, (probably I may discover more as I go on,) I think, as far as my recollection helps me, we differ *in toto.* I have not found a single sentiment to which I can give a full, unreserved, unqualified consent.

If there be an exception to this, it is in that part of your work where you observe that the present is a tremendous crisis. But as this, in a great measure, is no more connected with the immediate object of our dispute than it would with any other, I should have passed it by, had it not struck me that the intemperate anger, which you have manifested through the whole of your pamphlet, carries no correspondence with such a persuasion. Surely, Sir, if you believe that the times are alarming, gentleness, and not invective, would have better suited your cause. Lenient, and not corrosive

applications, bid fairest to heal wounds that are lacerated.

Yes, Sir, the present era is alarming, awfully alarming. And that man must be palsied, indeed, in all the faculties of his mind, that is not tremblingly alive to the conviction of it. What the prophet of Judea marked as a prominent part, in the troubles of his days, to denote the hand of God in the visitation, may be well applied to our own. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name. Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it."

But, though in this single solitary sentiment we agree, yet in no other do we harmonize. In tracing the evil of our present calamities as a nation, to its source, none can have trodden more opposite paths for the discovery.

You say that evangelical preaching is the great inlet to sin. It is to the want of it that I ascribe the abounding of iniquity. You contend that the doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness. I assert, that it is that grace alone which bringeth salvation, which can teach us, or when taught, enable us to practice the divine lessons of denying "ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." In your calculation, a system of morality is competent to the full correction of the minds and manners of the people. According to my creed, nothing short of a change of heart can accomplish a reform.

From opinions so contradictory, and such as in the nature of things, can never be reconciled, our appeal must be to matter of fact and experience, for a discovery with whom the truth is.

While you venture to charge evangelical preaching, and the doctrines of grace, as leading to licentiousness; there is a solemn demand upon you, whatever, in the lightness and vanity of your mind, you may think of it, to substantiate the truth of what you say. Had you

taken the word of God for your guide upon this point, you would have found that the accusation which you have now made, was long since made, and as fully answered. When certain characters, in the days of the apostle Paul, brought the same charge against his preaching the doctrines of grace, as you have done against ours; and because, in his magnifying the riches of that grace he had said, that "our unrighteousness gave occasion to commend the righteousness of God;" they slandered the apostle, and he, with all the warmth of an holy indignation, refuted the base calumny. "We be slanderously reported (saith the apostle); and some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come." But what doth he immediately add? "Whose damnation (saith he) is just." These are awful words. You would do well to pause over them.

We contend, Sir, and upon the most convincing evidences we prove also, in the lives and conversation of all that are the real partakers of grace, that it is a "doctrine after godliness." Every thing that is amiable is included in it, as referring to all the great branches of moral and religious practice. And we challenge the world to the strictest scrutiny into the conduct of those who really, and truly, and heartily receive the doctrines of grace, so as to live under their blessed influence, whether they are not "examples of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

It is impossible indeed it should be otherwise, for it cannot fail of its effect in a single instance. If a saving change from God's Holy Spirit hath passed upon the heart, the sure consequences must follow. And you will be pleased, Sir, to remember, that to the accomplishment of this one great design, the whole tendency of evangelical preaching, as an instrument in the hand of God, is directed.

Men of no real religion there may be, and men of

no real religion there always will be, who mingle in the congregations where the truths of God are preached, as well as in others. Such may make a profession also, it is very possible, and take up with a *form*, while unacquainted with the *power* of godliness. But common candour, and common charity, would not surely make an estimate of true religion, from the characters of such false professors of it. Those objections against the doctrines of grace, taken from such causes, are no more real and well founded, than if men were to argue against the principles of the admirably constructed laws of our country, because many who live under them, find no restraint from them to their unbridled lusts and passions.

Before I take leave of this part of my answer to your hints, I beg, Sir, that it may be noticed by you, that I contend for this as one that contendeth for a plain matter of fact. The doctrines of grace, wherever they are received in the heart, have a blessed tendency to reform the morals of mankind. And their gracious influences do appear in the conscientious observance of what the apostle so sweetly enjoins, "whatsoever things are true: whatsoever things are honest: whatsoever things are just: whatsoever things are pure: whatsoever things are lovely: and whatsoever things are of good report."

Allow me now, Sir, to take a short view of your wished-for scheme of preaching, and let us both look at it without prejudice on the one hand, or partiality on the other.

If, according to your apprehension of the persuasiveness of moral preaching, it is fully competent to induce a reform among all ranks and orders of the people; will you, or can you, explain why it is that it should so uniformly fail of its end; and even in cases where it is fostered, and countenanced with all the auxiliaries, which might tend to give it energy? I refer now

particularly to the higher ranks of men, where, from the many advantages of circumstances and education, we might reasonably hope, if any where, to find the most illustrious examples of it.

You profess that the present moment is a *tremendous crisis.* You seem to think that if the poisonous principles which have barbarized a neighbouring state should diffuse their pestilential effluvia, through the atmosphere of our highly favoured country, they would make a Bedlam or an Acaldema, or both, in our land. In this I venture to believe there can be but one opinion. But suffer me to ask you, under such impressions, hath that moral preaching you think so persuasive, induced a becoming deportment? What place of public amusement hath been shut up on the occasion? What examples of awakened piety in the more solemn observance of the sabbath, have the rich and great manifested in consequence thereof?

Certainly, Sir, there must be some latent cause, some other repulsive power operating, and which you have not taken into the account, but which remains to be discovered, to explain wherefore it is that things are so. If you have any candour, you must allow that not all the eloquence of moral preaching, joined with all the eloquence of self-interest, and under circumstances the most promising from refinement and education; and circumstances at the same time the most alarming from the consideration of personal safety; yet all unitedly taken together, have not been found sufficient to give a new bias to the human heart, but have lost their effect.

I observe, from the portrait which you have drawn of human nature, in the dark shades of it, the exercise of your pencil hath been limited to the humbler walks of society. Was it, Sir, because you could find no originals of real life to copy from, of similar complexions, among the higher order of the people? Surely you have read mankind to very little purpose, or rather to

no purpose at all, if you do not know that the Historic Gallery of the nation, in the living and moving characters of it, could furnish you with as many, and as highly finished subjects for the brush, among the great, as among the small, and where the features of human depravity would appear full as large and prominent.

Do not fancy, Sir, that I am taking pleasure at this sad representation of our poor nature; I would to God, if it was his blessed will, that the subject was a fiction, and not real. No, Sir; I delight not in caricature. With me, the matter is too serious for laughter, and too much connected with evil to be trifled with. But, painful as it is to hold up the mirror to the view, that mirror ought to be held up to every man's view; and, therefore, I hesitate not to say, that every one who looks into it, will, and must discover, that the heart of man, in the present fallen state of existence, is alike susceptible of evil, and of every enormity of evil, in all situations, all ranks, all departments, all degrees and circumstances of life.

Will you feel indignant at this account, and tell me that you know many that are exceptions to this general statement? I can tell you the same. Most cheerfully will I echo to that voice, and say, blessed be God, there are. But, Sir, to whom, or to what cause shall we put this down? Not to the effects of moral preaching; not to the inherent worth of the human heart, as many have fondly supposed; not to habits of education; not to trainment; not to example. Under all these circumstances do we not frequently see the breakings out of the natural mind when it can no longer brook restraint? To what, then, shall those exceptions be ascribed? The answer is at hand. To that preventing, and restraining grace of which you think so little, and I desire to think so highly; which, like the hidden spring of a machine, acts most when least perceived. It is to this first cause, we are taught by an authority not to be

doubted, all that vast difference which marks the character of him "that serveth God, from him that serveth him not," is to be referred. And happy they, who not only feel their mercies, but are led to see the direction from whence these mercies come, and as cheerfully to bow down in suitable acknowledgments for the distinguishing favour.

Would you save your country at this *tremendous crisis?* Would you be instrumental in the hand of God, to induce a real reform? Do not be mad enough to expect it from a quarter from whence help can never come. Moral preaching may propose precepts, but possesseth no power to enforce them. Survey, Sir, the mass, the vast mass of human corruption more accurately. Put the moral barometer to the same point to try, for it will suit all. Ascertain the dimensions of sin amidst all the ranks of life, and the conclusion will be, must be the same; somewhat higher, and more persuasive, than mere human power is competent to the remedy.

Oh! how would that man merit to be hailed as the deliverer of his country at this *tremendous crisis* (I use your own words) who, like the poor wise man mentioned by Solomon, had wisdom to deliver it by his counsel. Had he the power of persuasion, to shew from whence the danger came, and from whom the means of remedy can alone be found. This would be both to ascertain the nature of disease, and to point to the cure. This would be to stop the ravages of sin and the ravages of war together. This would be to drive back the flames of jacobinism from our walls, and raise up a holy flame kindled from the altar of God within.

But, from human reasoning, let us direct our inquiry to what the scriptures of God speak upon this interesting subject. I have stated in the fairest and most unimposing manner, the different views of evangelical and of moral preaching. Now let us hear what decision comes from the sanctuary upon the point.

If there be one doctrine of the gospel more plainly revealed, and more forcibly insisted upon than another, it is that which the Son of God himself taught; namely, *the regeneration of the heart.* This was the grand feature which was to mark the mercy of God, in the latter day dispensation. The great Redeemer of mankind was promised under these glorious distinctions of character. He was not only to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but he was to take away the love of sin, and the dominion of sin out of the minds of his redeemed, by forming within them a new nature. And this regeneration of the heart was to form a most unequivocal and decided testimony of the character of the people of God in all ages of his church.

Whoever reads our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus the Jew, upon this subject, will immediately discover in what strong terms the Redeemer speaks of it, and points out the indispensable necessity of this great change taking place in the hearts of his followers. Every thing important seems folded up in it. The greatest stress is laid upon it. So momentous a thing is it made by Jesus, that he declares without it there can be no entrance into his kingdom. And whatever other blessed effects were to follow in the practical fruits of christianity in the lives of his disciples; this, as the first, the bottom, the foundation of every other, is laid in it: "Ye must be born again."

I am no stranger, Sir, to all that sceptics have said, and still continue to say against this doctrine. I could easily anticipate and mark down, if it were needful, one by one, every objection which you might bring, or your predecessors have brought, to do away into metaphor the plain words of Jesus. Believe me, Sir, I have already gone over every inch of the ground in the controversy. At every step I have made in those divine parts of the gospel, I have met with opposition from men who do not believe it, and from men who never

can believe it; among the despisers who wonder and perish while the Lord is working this work in the minds of his people. But where would be the *cui bono* of the labour? For after all that hath been said, or can be said, from the presumptuous reasonings of the human heart in militating against this truth of Jesus, the truth itself stands still where Jesus placed it, at the front of his gospel; the portal opens with no other. An entrance into all the blessings of redemption hath no other way. Until we are brought in here, we are brought no where within the sacred enclosure. And let men fancy what they please, and according to the hypothesis they form, let them draw what conclusions they please; yet the words of Jesus return again in the same unalterable tone of decision; and as an echo answers to the voice, so the sound returns to silence every appeal; "Ye must be born again."

I shall not stay to inquire, at this time, in what, according to the analogy of scripture, this new birth consists. This might be easily done, and hath indeed been already done, times without number, in a way which cannot but prove conclusive and satisfactory with all candid minds. But I am well aware, that if I were to enter upon this subject, the original question of our controversy would be lost in it. And this would defeat in a great measure, the object for which I write. No, Sir, all that is necessary to my present correspondence with you, on this point, is to establish the fact itself. There must be a new birth for an entrance into Christ's kingdom. Let this new birth, therefore, be what it may, the very admission of the thing itself throws to the ground all your high-flown notions of the competency of morality to the full correction of the minds and manners of the people. The Son of God himself decides the point. All systems before this change hath taken place, are alike nugatory and vain. There must be a new birth, as the foundation for new

conduct. The fountain must be purified, or the streams will still be foul. And therefore, Sir, notwithstanding all the plausibility of your reasoning, moral virtue in its highest attainments, comes short of the salvation of the soul.

How beautiful and demonstrative is the method which the Son of God hath adopted, to put this doctrine in a light, suited to our apprehensions. "Make the tree good (saith Jesus), and its fruit will be good: or else, make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." There must be a change, a regeneration, a new birth. A post, though rotten, may be varnished, and sepulchres may be whitened. But however highly polished the former may be, it is but the rotten post still. And how fair soever the latter shall strike the view of the beholder without, yet within it is full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness.

If I thought it would gain any additional weight in your mind, by the opinion of Dr. Blair upon this subject, I should very gladly call in to my aid his sentiments. The same truths from different men, according to the effect of little prejudices or partialities, often strike the mind very differently.

The quotation which you have made from Dr. Blair's Sermons, and the handsome terms in which you have spoken of him, seem to imply that you are among his admirers. Strange, indeed, that truth of any kind should need the countenance of any for its support, but so it is. I venture to believe that there are many who appreciate very highly the elegance of Dr. Blair as a writer, who have a sovereign contempt for his principles as a divine.

I had the pleasure of Dr. Blair's correspondence, before his death: and I believe, was among the latest to whom he wrote. His creed and mine in several points were not conformable to the same standard.

But I had no right to feel displeasure on this ground. The complexion of the mind, like the stature of the body will vary; every man is not alike, six feet high.

His views of some of the grand and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel I have always admired. I confess, indeed, that I have as often wished that in those parts of his sermons where he treats of those sublime subjects, he had not so hastily passed over them. But, certainly, he hath said enough in them on these points to mark the character and faith of the man: and I would hazard an opinion that even in his other discourses, and where he is most earnest in enforcing the practice of morality, his design was to enforce it as so many evidences, that a work of grace is wrought in the heart. He meant it as the *effect*, and not as the *cause* of godliness; as a testimony of religion, and not the substance of religion itself; as the proof that the persons living under such influence were brought into a state of peace with God, in Christ; and not that their practice of morality, in the greatest perfection of it, had, or could become the means of their acceptance with God in themselves.

I am inclined to this opinion concerning Dr. Blair's motives for dwelling so little upon the foundation, while dwelling so much on the superstructure of the gospel. But if I err, I shall find cause for sorrow more upon the Doctor's account than my own. For I hesitate not in this case then, to say, that the Doctor's creed was unsettled, and his mind wavering on the grand points of the gospel. A short quotation from his writings will serve in proof.

In the *first* volume of his Sermons, on the subject of devotion, he thus delivers his faith, on the doctrine of regeneration. 'The great Author of our religion (saith the Doctor) who well knew what was in man, laid the foundation of his whole system in the regeneration of the heart. The change which was to be accomplished

on his followers, he did not purpose to effect merely by regulating their external conduct, but by forming within them a new nature; by "taking away the heart of stone and giving them a heart of flesh." '

Now, Sir, from this striking passage in the Doctor's sermon, allow me to ask, did Dr. Blair believe in the doctrine of regeneration? If he did, (as who upon earth could question it after so palpable a testimony from his own words) how can they who profess to shelter themselves under the Doctor's wing, deny the doctrine of regeneration, as if morality, and not grace, was the sole topic of his discourses? And if he did not, on what terms will any man explain this view he hath given of the doctrine itself, but upon the ground which I have stated?

In the *second* volume of his Sermons, on the subject of the happiness of a future state, Dr. Blair thus expresseth his ideas of the doctrine of the atonement. 'How are the robes of the blessed washed? Whence is derived that spotless purity in which they are arrayed? The Spirit of God hath answered us: "from the blood of the Lamb;" leading our thoughts to that high dispensation of mercy to which the saints above owe their establishment, first in grace, and then in glory. From that blood "which was shed for the remission of sins," flows both the atonement of human guilt, and the regeneration of human nature.'

Now, Sir, from this specimen of Dr. Blair's belief in the great doctrine of the atonement, as well as from what was reviewed before concerning his sentiments on that of regeneration, suffer me to ask, had the Doctor lived to the present hour, would he have thought any apology necessary for evangelical preaching? Would he have considered himself complimented by men who profess to admire his morality, but despise the faith from whence that morality proceeds? Nay, Sir, let me demand, would he not have looked indignant on all

such who pervert his labours into the very reverse to which he intended them?

Why will not they who profess to be in quest of truth, and would have the public believe that they have no other object in view but truth, and write but from such principles, why will they not be honest in their dealings with men's writings, as well as with their persons and property, and be valiant only for the truth's sake?

Nothing could excite my astonishment more than reading that part of your pamphlet, in which you denominate evangelical preaching 'a new system of religion.' Perhaps my wonder was the greater from the character in which you came forward to the public and the legislature, as a Barrister.

I ought to take for granted (for it certainly puts me to no expense so to do) that you really are what you profess to be, a man learned in the law. For such I suppose the title of Barrister is intended to imply. But yet methinks a Barrister unacquainted with the laws of the land is somewhat novel. And yet I correct myself, it is an age of masquerade: few among the pantomimical characters around us are, perhaps, in reality what they appear to be. Why had you not, Sir, while enumerating so many new systems of men, and things, of gardening, and agriculture, and physic, and the like, why had you not added, and *new* Barristers ignorant of *old* laws?

You deem the preaching of the gospel, according to my writings, a *new* doctrine, and forget how many laws were passed about "a century and half since," respecting men whose tenets in religion were the same.

Did you never read the law on the subject of the articles entered into by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and ratified by the king; in which, among other points of a similar nature to the evangelical preaching of the present day, there is one so

much the same, *verbatim et literatim*, that no person can perceive the smallest difference between them. I mean that where it is said, "we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is true, indeed, the law concerning this chapter of the clergy, did not take place at an earlier period than in the year 1652. And those who lived before the flood, from the longevity of their existence, might consider this, for aught I know, a recent transaction. But whatever the antediluvians would have called it, with you or me, whose vapourish tenure of life is brought within so narrow a compass, methinks when we talk of an occurrence two hundred and forty-six years since, we should be thought not serious to term it *new*.

But, Sir, believe me, I would be no preacher of those evangelical doctrines if I could not trace their antiquity to a period far, very far, more remote than this. That the Son of God himself in the doctrine of regeneration preached it, I have already proved; and that his apostles followed their Master's steps, the slightest acquaintance with the scriptures will abundantly testify. What one said, all agreed in, "if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." And what think you of Noah as a preacher of righteousness? What righteousness could this man preach? Not the moral law. For this was not given until many ages after. What righteousness then was it? The apostle in explaining it, saith, that "it was by faith." And that Noah, by virtue of it, became "heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Nothing can be more plain therefore, that Noah's preaching, and Noah's faith, by which he preached, was in reference to the promised seed. Hence it must undeniably follow, that when Noah preached, and what the present evangelical ministers preach, is in sum and substance one and the same. He preached of a Redeemer to come; and they who

preach Jesus now, of one that is come. In this lies all the difference.

I hope, Sir, by this time the venerable principles of evangelical preaching will have arisen so far at least in your esteem, as their antiquity can recommend them. More than this I do not expect from *you.* Less than this you cannot with truth withhold. I have clearly traced it to the period before the flood; and if it were at all needful to my argument, I might carry it back to a yet more remote age. Christ is expressly said in scripture to have been "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And as such, every shadowy representation of that one great event by sacrifice, might be properly said to preach Jesus. Thus Abel is said to have offered his sacrifice *by faith.* And hence every thing which pointed to Christ with an eye of faith as the promised seed, preached Christ. And as this preaching came in with the bible in the very first word of promise, so under the various modifications of it, whether in type, or sacrifice, or prophecy, the same preaching hath uniformly kept pace with it, through all the intermediate ages of the church, to the present hour. And allow me, Sir, to add, (and by the way, the solemnity of the consideration is not what least concerns you in the argument,) this preaching of Christ, must and will continue in direct defiance of all its foes, until the purpose for which its ministry is appointed by its almighty Author, shall have been fully answered, and grace is consummated in glory. I hesitate not, therefore, to put it down as a fixed incontrovertible thing, maugre all the opinion of Barristers, the true preaching of the evangelical doctrines is no new preaching. In this respect it is like its divine founder, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

It is with regret that I complain. But another part of your pamphlet meets my eye, which calls it forth. Whether you affect to be ignorant, or whether it be

real I know not, but the observations you make concerning the covenant of grace only serve to shew that you are as little acquainted with your bible as you are with the laws respecting evangelical preaching. I thought you on that account a miserable Barrister. But here you manifest that you are a worse divine.

It would be the work of a distinct treatise, and not the subject of a letter, to enter upon the scriptural account of the covenant of grace. And though I consider myself, in some measure, called upon to defend the truth against the daring attacks of unbelievers, I do not hold myself bound to open a school for their instruction.

If you were more conversant with your bible than your pamphlet shews you are, you would have discovered that the sacred writers are perpetually dwelling upon this important part of revelation, of the *everlasting covenant.* I would send you, therefore, to the examination of the word of God, that you may first discover this, and be fully certified in your mind, that there is such a thing revealed from heaven as the *everlasting covenant.*

When you have made yourself well informed of this as a fact, I would then desire you to ask yourself, (for I write now for your information, not my own) what construction *you* would put upon the term *everlasting.* If you think at all, you must conclude that a covenant that is in its nature *everlasting*, could not commence in *time*, and consequently, creatures of time, such as we are, could have no hand in it: will you learn to digest this?

When you have advanced these steps in the climax of our subject, you may next be told, that, according to your views of a covenant, that it must be between parties, so there are two parties to this. And who should constitute parties in an everlasting covenant, but the everlasting God? Yes, Sir, Jehovah, existing

in a plurality of persons, hath formed this gracious compact; so that here is God the Father graciously engaging to bestow such and such blessings of redemption, in consequence of God the Son's undertaking to fulfil all righteousness, and to expiate all the penal effects of sin for his people; and here is God the Son as graciously undertaking, and as gloriously accomplishing both to make the covenant complete and sure: this is the plan of grace; this is the magna charta of the gospel. And a covenant founded in grace, and originating and completed in mercy, may well be called, as the word of God hath called it, an *everlasting covenant.*

I told you, Sir, in the very first page almost of my letter, that we agree in nothing; and in no point is this more evident than in our different opinions of Mr. Paley.

You say, 'There is, perhaps, no public writer to whose labours in the cause of moral virtue the public are more indebted than to Mr. Paley.' I say that perhaps there are not many who have contributed more to increase the mass of moral evil, and, therefore, deserve less from mankind than Mr. Paley. So that while to your dazzled eye, he appears as a bright luminary leading to the temple of truth, because you look at him through the meretricious glare in which high station and public countenance hath made him shine; I behold him as mariners do those light-houses which are purposely placed upon rocks in the midst of the sea, by way of warning the navigator from coming near.

Before Mr. Paley sent forth his book into the world, of 'Moral and Political Philosophy,' in which he hath spent a whole chapter on 'subscription to articles of religion,' no doubt there were many who smothered conviction, and suppressed the qualms of their consciences when they had signed their consent to doctrines, which, in their hearts, they did not believe.

But when Mr. Paley came forward with this publication, many more with an uncovered front, under his authority, became bold to sign them, and immediately to tell the world they did not believe what they had signed. It was reserved for Mr. Paley to take the lead in this pre-eminency of subscription, and to throw down the fence of modesty on this ground.

I have said so much already in the detection of Mr. Paley's principles on this subject, in my letter to Mr. Polwhele about nine years since, and which letter is before the public, that I think it less needful to enlarge upon the same points now. But as you hold up this man as a paragon of excellence in his way, I think it my duty to warn others against his fallacy, and especially the younger part of the clergy, that they may not be led away by the speciousness of his reasoning, into an error which the conscience of riper years may deeply regret.

Mr. Paley observes, that 'the inquiries concerning subscriptions will be *quis imposuit, et quo animo?*' that is, 'who imposed this subscription, and with what design is it imposed?' And he adds, 'the bishop who receives the subscription is not the imposer, any more than the cryer of a court who administers the oath to the jury and witnesses, is the person that imposes it; and, therefore, the private opinion of the bishop, or his interpretation of the articles, is of no signification.' And Mr. Paley adds, it is 'the intention of the legislature, the subscriber is bound to obey.'

This is an admirable foundation which Mr. Paley lays down for the detection of himself. For after this statement he goes on to observe, 'they who contend that nothing less can justify subscription to the thirty-nine articles than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession; not to one

controverted proposition but to many hundreds.' And Mr. Paley leaping from hence to his own conclusions, as though the statement he had thus made was at once granted, he instantly subjoins, 'If the authors of the law did not intend this, what did they intend?' And this question he immediately follows up with setting down, what in his views they did intend; and concludes, that the articles were only thrown up in the church to keep out abettors of popery, anabaptists, puritans, and the members of several leading sects in those days. And hence, in direct defiance of plain common sense, Mr. Paley hath intimated that, though he had before observed, no man had a right to exercise private opinion concerning the articles themselves, but was obliged conscientiously to fulfil the law of the imposer, every one who stood free of the sects before mentioned, might safely sign the articles.

How many, led away by the fallacy of such reasoning have followed Mr. Paley's opinion, I know not; a future day will discover. But that he taught such a doctrine his own writings prove.

You tell me that the articles are proved to be not calvinistic. But what is this but a quibble? What had John Calvin to do with the articles of the church of England? The simple question is, are they scriptural? And 'do you believe them?' is the solemn inquiry that is supposed to be first put to every subscriber. If you do not, how can you sign them? if you do, how is it that you do not preach and write agreeably to them? Can an anti-trinitarian conscientiously subscribe to the first? Can an unbeliever in the Godhead and atonement of Christ sign the second? And can the mere moral preacher who denies in his creed, the justification by Christ alone, sign the eleventh?

If after this you conceive that Mr. Paley's labours in the cause of moral virtue merit the thanks of his fol-

lowers, I shall not envy you your opinion. Who are they that thank him? Not those who did sign, because he had taught it; but yet at the time had too much sense to believe what he had advanced. Not those who afterwards felt sorrow for having done what they could not but in heart disapprove. Who are they then, and where are they? Do any living saints thank him? Do any of the faithful departed thank him? Doth God thank him for this labour of love?

But from Mr. Paley and his morality, allow me to turn to you, and to the review of your morality.

You profess to have a high regard for moral virtue, and take to yourself no small complacency from the idea of habits of righteousness, as if you had long been in the apparel. 'If we would enter into life (say you) we must keep the commandments.'

But, Sir, setting aside the higher claims upon you from God for the numberless breaches of his laws, allow me to ask which of them have you kept, as it concerns your conduct towards me? Not the *first*, surely. For John saith, "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Not the *second*, for the Lord Jesus hath given in one short verse, the comprehension of all the laws of the second table, when he saith, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And then adds, concerning both, "on these two commandments hang all the laws and the prophets."

And have you not broken both in my instance according to this comment of Jesus and his servant? Judge you for yourself, for to your own conscience I appeal.

In the representation you have made of my writings to the public and the legislature, (from what motives I leave with you to determine,) you have endeavoured to blacken my character, as if the magistrates' authority

would be incompetent to keep due order in the metropolis, while my publications are suffered to be circulated. You have garbled from those writings parts and portions, here and there, so as to make them say what you pleased. And after winding up the whole in the most finished way as might best suit the object you had in view, you have added your own comment as if it was mine, so as to call forth the indignation of the public and the legislature upon me.

You cannot but be conscious, Sir, that the very title of the book which you have fallen so unmercifully upon, had you but used the honesty with me to have preserved it entire, would have refuted the whole of your charge. But as this suited not your purpose, you have only referred to it in part.

It would be an inexpedient service in me to bring the *whole* of the title-page forward in my letter, was it designed for *your* information: you are but too well acquainted with it already to make this necessary. But as my letter to you is but the medium of telling the public and the legislature whom you address the justice of my cause, and the falseness of your charge, I make no apology for inserting it at large.

When I sent forth into the world the little pamphlet in question, it was in consequence of several distressing cases which I had met with in my daily occupation of visiting the sick, where I found a more than ordinary apprehension of the mind, lest their situations, by reason of sin, had precluded the hope of mercy. For the relief of such peculiar maladies of soul, I published the book in question, entitled, 'A Prop against all Despair, intended for the consolation of self-condemned sinners in general, but more especially for those perishing souls, who fear that they have sinned beyond the possibility of pardon.' This is the title, and that no possible misconstruction might be put upon the work itself, the commencement of it is in these words:—

'I begin the subject with assuming for a principle, that my reader is one of those for whom it is designed, and to whom the title-page directs it, namely, 'a self-condemned and distressed sinner.' One who is very apprehensive that he hath sinned beyond the possibility of forgiveness. And under the delusion of the enemy, is driven to despair, and like those the prophet mentions, feels the same sentiment, and is expressing himself in the same language; "There is no hope; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go."

'I enter upon the subject from this threshold, because the door of my present design, opens to no other view of the gospel. My only object being to inquire whether there be not, under divine grace, a sufficient prop, found in the glorious gospel of the ever blessed God, to stay up the hopes of every poor perishing, self-reproaching sinner, who is brought to see and deplore his manifold transgressions against God, and under the alarmed state of mind is crying out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

'It will be equally obvious I hope, that the unawakened, the unhumbled, and unconvinced sinner, who is ignorant of the plague of his own heart, though equally needing salvation, yet from being unconcerned about it, hath no immediate interest in this little work. It is the self-condemned, self-loathing, and self-despairing sinner, and him alone, for whom I now write.'

Now, Sir, suffer me to ask how could you, under all the fine impressions you profess to feel of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour in your heart, and with the full prospect of heaven in your view, from keeping the commandments, and standing pre-eminent in the practice of all moral duties, how could you venture to tell the public and the legislature what you have, respecting this little book of mine? Doth a single page, or a single line in it, authorize the idea,

that the seducer might return, and seduce one victim more? The robber, add one more fraud? The murderer, dip his hands once more in blood, for the prop against all despair holds forth the permission? Did you confine yourself to truth when you said this? Did you yourself, even you yourself, believe what you wrote?

Do not fancy, Sir, you have hurt *me* by this attempt to murder my character and reputation. It is youself, Sir, that is most hurt, not me: I really feel sorrow that any man should be such a bubble to himself, as to fancy himself highly moral, highly conscientious, in keeping the commandments, while defective in the lowest instances of morality, and breaking a positive commandment, even where there seemed to be no temptation.

It would be somewhat singular to be sure, and yet much more extraordinary things have happened, if in a cooler hour your views should take a different turn, and you should find some of the consolations in the book you have so much despised, founded upon true scriptural arguments, to suit your own circumstances. In return for all your intended injury to me (whether you choose to believe it or not) I can truly say, the greatest evil I wish you is, that this may be your case.

Were it not for departing from the limits which I have prescribed to myself in this letter, which is simply to defend God's truth, against your perversion of it, I might justly expose you to much censure, to which (unfortunately for your cause) you have laid yourself but too open.

Perhaps there never was a more striking instance, in a controversial subject, of an author's committing himself, as we find in pages 83, 84, of your pamphlet. So little acquainted are you with the word of God, that you have literally taken a passage in Toplady's Sermon, which he had made use of from a part of

Paul's 2d Epistle to Timothy, c. i. v. 9, as Toplady's own; and from this presumptuous conclusion, in your own mind, you have as presumptuously said, 'If this be the doctrine of the true gospel, then the new testament cannot be the true gospel.' And thus, taking the words of an apostle, for the words of Toplady, you have, as usual, leapt to your own decision; 'That let him come in what disguise he may, he is an infidel.' Do, Sir, let me intreat you to read your bible with more attention before that you come forward to the world to decide on characters, and on the great truths of God. The preachers of evangelical truth can desire no higher distinction than to be placed on the same class with the apostles. And the man who determines Paul to have been an infidel, pays a very high compliment, however unintentional, in saying the same of those of the household. But it might be well for you to consider whether you are not bordering on blasphemy in such sentences: or, at least, like the man Solomon describes, who, while casting about "firebrands and arrows, and death, saith, am not I in sport?"

You tell the public and the legislature that this performance of your's is but the *first* part of your "Hints." You have somewhat more extravagant (if there can be yet any thing more extravagant and outrageous) to bring forward.

Before you proceed, however, allow me to take the office of a Barrister for once, and counsel a counsellor.

As long as those old ramparts of our constitution remain, (I mean the articles of the church of England,) you may depend upon it, all the evangelical preachers of the church will get under them; and in this case, you cannot but know, the whole artillery of their enemies can never reach them.

But there is a way by which, if you have power enough (and inclination I am sure you do not want), the whole party might be routed at once. It is only

to prove what you assert, that evangelical preaching is a *new system*, for every body will admit that the articles are *old;* and then you know, they will be convicted of preaching a *new* doctrine contrary to their subscription to the *old* articles. And as this would demand a *new* subscription to new articles, or in the alternative, they would be all cashiered; you would gain in this case a complete victory, and the field would be your own.

In this case, I pledge you my word and honour, I would retire without the necessity of being constrained to it. Indeed, I should blush if there was one in the whole body who withdrew before me. The consciousness of having designed well, though now and then, no doubt, in the wrong, (for who is there that is not,) would give me a dignity, even in retirement. And it would be a consolation even then, as far as my own personal circumstances were concerned, that nothing had befallen me, but what had befallen better men than me, in all ages of the world. A thousand mercies in my poor unworthy life would, in the recollection, call up subject of praise to a gracious God for all that is past. And a well grounded confidence in God's mercies through Christ, (too well grounded to be shaken by any thing you have advanced) would furnish the most blessed hope for all that is to come.

At present, Sir, we are blessed with an highly privileged constitution. The great truths of God, in the glorious principles of salvation, are held forth in our churches, in our articles, and from numberless pulpits. And without wishing to give unnecessary offence to any, I would say, if they were but thoroughly understood, they would be held forth in all.

But, Sir, if the change you seem so much to wish for, was once to take place, if evangelical doctrines were driven out, and moral essays only to supply their room; doth it not strike you, that such duplicity between our articles and our preaching, must sooner

or later call down divine displeasure? "The blood of souls" (saith God by his servant the prophet) "will I require at your hands." Which (saith Chrysostom) are thunderbolts and not words. And if the right aiming thunderbolts of God should once be sent abroad in this visitation, it doth not require the spirit of prophecy surely to foretell, the fire will be awful. The venerable turrets of our churches, which rise to the clouds, will not be able to resist the lightning with which they are charged. In vain doth the cross stand as an electrical conductor on the dome of St. Paul's, if the preaching of the cross be not held within. Nothing but the blood of the Lamb sprinkled on the houses, restrained the destroying angel from entering!

As a farewell admonition I cannot better take my leave of you, than in the memorable words of Tertullian to Marcion: '*Parce unicæ spei totius orbis, O tu qui destruis necessarium decus fidei!*—Spare the only hope of the whole world, Oh, thou who destroyest the most necessary glory of our faith!'

LETTER II.

SIR,

I HAVE this moment heard the *second* blast of your horn, and hasten to meet you on the field of battle. And now you no longer appear in the questionable shape which you assumed in your former controversy, I no longer feel the embarrassment I then laboured under, from an unconsciousness in what character I had to approach you.

In this renewed challenge which you have issued, I find that I am again arraigned, with the same charge of high crimes and misdemeanours; neither hath my former defence been considered by *you* in the smallest degree satisfactory.

To be sure, it is not a little unfavourable to carrying evidences of truth to the mind, on any point of contention, that we are all such partial judges in our own cause.

I really thought that I had very fully and circumstantially refuted the whole of your accusation. And I pleased myself moreover, with the hope, that I had done it in a way so becoming the christian and the gentleman, that if I succeeded not in convincing your judgment, I should, at least, in disarming your resentment.

Long satisfied as I have been in my own mind, that the warmest zeal for God and his cause, can never be chilled in being tempered with charity to man, I studied to avoid every thing which might have had a tendency to excite acrimony. And although in the vindication of what I knew to be the truth, I dared not to temporize; yet, making a just distinction between men and their errors, my religion (how contemptuously soever you are pleased to think of it,) taught me to observe the proper boundary of that conduct which ought to be exercised towards both. To your person, in manifesting the utmost tenderness, forbearance, and moderation; while to your mistaken views of things there could be shewn no favour.

But from the contents of your work, in this second part of it, I perceive that all my endeavours to convince or to conciliate, have alike proved abortive. The schism of separation rather appears to widen.—It is a well-known axiom in physics, and perhaps may hold equally good in religion, that "where the sphere of attraction ceaseth, that of repulsion begins." I ought not therefore

to be surprised at the ill success of my former letter: neither indeed am I. The iron and the clay, which the prophet saw in the vision, never could coalesce.

You seem disposed to much pleasantry at the awkwardness which I expressed, in addressing my former letter to you. It certainly was not a little embarrassing to my feelings, and I hesitated not to acknowledge it, that I had to enter upon a subject of polemics, with one in disguise. I could not be insensible of the many disadvantages under which I laboured, in consequence of it. I knew not who you was, nor what you was; neither of the service in which you had engaged, nor the real motive for which you entered that service. And as you had not the candour to make an open avowal of your religious tenets, it was not an easy matter (at least it was not with me,) to ascertain with much precision, what those tenets were. Indeed, as I now and then glanced your armour, I thought (but I rather wished to suppress, than encourage the idea) that I espied the arrow of heresy in your quiver.

Besides, Sir, (if I may venture to say as much without incurring your displeasure) you came forward with a plausibility of appearance, not only as the professed friend of religion and morals, but as the partizan and supporter of the church of England. In consequence of which, and under this impression, I paused not unfrequently as I read your pamphlet, and debated in my mind, whether the writer of it might not be a member, if not a minister, of the establishment.—It is possible, (I said to myself) that my opponent may be one of those high moral characters of our church, who, from not having yet felt the plague of his own heart, is unconscious in what an extensive sense the scriptures have marked the universal state of human corruption. And hence, in the fervour of his zeal for the practical effects of the gospel, hath overlooked the cause from whence alone those effects can flow.—It was in a great

measure from such ideas, that awkwardness arose, of which in my former letter I complained, and which exposed me to your mirth.—But, Sir, allow me to say, that you of all men have the least reason to take pride upon the occasion; for had you been more open, I should have been less embarrassed. Your want of candour was the sole cause of the restraint I felt. The knowledge of your person or your name, was then, as it is now with me, (for I am still unacquainted with either) a matter of moon-shine, and of no consequence whatever. But the generous and manly acknowledgment of your creed would have been fair and honest; and such as, let me tell you, the public, as well as your opponents, had a right to expect from one, who prides himself in so high a regard for morality as to make it the *primum mobile* of his whole religion.

But, Sir, whatever private considerations operated upon your mind, to keep out of view as much as possible, the particularities of your faith, when you sent forth the *first* part of your Hints into the religious world; you have made ample amends in the discovery of them now, by this *second* publication. In the open profession of the creed of an *unitarian,* such a volume of light is thrown over both pamphlets, as very fully developes your whole religious character. We are no longer at a loss to explain the cause of that high displeasure you have shewn, both at the doctrines, and preachers of evangelical truth. All astonishment ceaseth with this discovery. It can be no more the subject of surprise, that the *trinitarian hypothesis* (as in the lightness of your mind, you presume to call that sacred doctrine of the bible,) should offend you. The public and the legislature will now be fully prepared to look at any further exhibitions you may think proper to bring before them of divine truths (if they are so disposed) through an *unitarian* perspective.

I perceive by your pamphlet, that you intend to fol-

low up the subject which you have entered upon, in these Hints of your's, to a considerable extent. And before I enter upon the subject of mine, I beg permission to say, that I hope you will. You tell the public, that you have by no means done with it; and I say in answer, that I should be sorry if you had, for I can hardly be said to have begun. You observe that the doctrines of evangelical preaching 'require to be brought out fully, and to be placed in all their bearings under the public observation.' Amen, say I! And amen, must every lover of truth say to the proposal. Let every system, every profession of religion be fully analyzed and sifted to the bottom; that can be no truth which will not bear to be brought forth into open daylight, or which dares not challenge the strictest investigation.

You shall, therefore, not only have my heartiest concurrence, but my heartiest thanks, for bringing forward all those great truths of God, one by one, and placing them 'in all their bearings.' And if the public and legislature will not be tired in following you over the whole of them, until that you have filled as many pamphlets as you have already filled pages, I promise you I will not; though I engage to attend you step by step in the bringing them forward.—Indeed, I have been so often called to this service in times past, and so deeply exercised in inspecting the 'bearings' you speak of, when brought forward by far abler hands than your's, that there is nothing new to me remaining in the subject to be explored. So that I shall be quite at home through every part of the discussion; and besides, my province upon the present occasion must necessarily be very limited. I shall only have to watch over you as you bring forth 'the bearings,' and to see that they receive no tinge of an unitarian colouring as they pass through your hands -- that is all, in the defence of truth, which will devolve on me.

And while that you are engaged in your way in 'dissecting with attention' (as you term it, page 3,) the *body* of evangelical doctrine, I hope that I may be indulged in mine, in lecturing with equal freedom, on the *skeleton* of unitarianism.

'*Audi alteram partem*,' can need no apology to a Barrister. Common sense must suppose that the component parts of the unitarian faith have 'their bearings also.' And common candour will acknowledge it to be but just, that those bearings 'should be brought out very fully, and placed under the public observation.' This therefore will be my province; and that which I shall endeavour faithfully to perform. I purpose to go over the whole subject, in order to display all the prominent features on the visage, indeed all its bearings, '*a capite ad calcem*.'

'You only propose (you say) to devote to this business a portion of the leisure left you by your professional avocations.' But with me you know, Sir, such employments form my very profession; my whole life is, or ought to be, dedicated to this service: I have literally no other engagements.—And although it is very true, the duties of a large and populous parish, such as mine, admit of no great portions of what some men might call leisure; yet I shall consider the intervals spent in this way, as so many relaxations from the more pressing demands of a parochial ministry; and I am looking forward with the hope that they will open a source both of information and pleasure.

But were it otherwise, I should blush to have it said, that a professor of the law could find leisure from the duties of his calling, to attend to subjects of a religious nature, while a preacher of the gospel needed a stimulus to prompt him to such employments! No, Sir! You yourself are pleased to think that 'the pastoral office is an office of deep and lasting responsibility.'—Well then may I!

Under this impression it is, that I do not think it my duty to watch over the spiritual interests of my parishioners *only;* but to extend a concern for the souls of men in every direction, and by every way, in which that concern can manifest itself. The whole church of Christ hath a claim upon me, as far as the Lord may be pleased to commission my poor labours to any usefulness. To this one object I would engage every little fragment of time. To this one end the bent of all my services should be directed; and more especially when heresies are abroad in the world, I would employ all the energy the Lord hath given me, to counteract and oppose them; humbly adopting and following the apostle's plan, in "warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Coloss. i. 28.

But, Sir, it is not a little mortifying to our arduous minds, (and we shall do well to be prepared for it) to consider, that while we are going on with increasing warmth in our respective causes, the public mind is proportionably cooling in their attention to us. Depend upon it, Sir, when the readers of our controversy shall have been sufficiently amused with the *novelty* of the subject they will grow tired of it; and the same event will take place in our contest, as I foretold Mr. Polwhele would follow his dispute with me, some nine years since, upon a similar occasion.

All men, more or less, are Athenians in this particular. And that Athenian spirit is continually in quest of some new thing. When therefore our writings cease to produce this, they will cease to amuse. And however interesting you or I may fancy them, both will then be alike thrown aside, among the old fashioned things of the day; or, as I hinted to Mr. Polwhele, to furnish materials for the trunk-makers. To be sure it is a sad damp to the dignity of the writer and his subject, that "Hints to the Public and Legislature," should

serve a purpose so ignoble. But stranger things have happened: perhaps if the shops of some of those gentlemen in the trunk business, who occupy the corners of St. Paul's Church-yard, were to be now examined, my prophecy concerning Mr. Polwhele's controversy with me, would be found fulfilled: and his letters and mine be discovered, forming a conspicuous figure in the linings of portmanteaus.

But to return to the more immediate object of our correspondence.—Before that I can either follow you in the examination of *the bearings* you have brought forth of evangelical doctrines, in this second part of your Hints, or that I can open my lectures on 'the bearings of unitarianism,' I must desire your previous attention, and the attention of all the parties you have called into the view of our dispute, to another subject, and that a very important one too, so far as truth is concerned, which hath already arisen out of our controversy.

In your haste to criminate me, you leap over all fences, and appear to have no regard to matters of fact, in forming your conclusions.—With you it is quite enough to bring forward charges unsubstantiated with any proof: then totally to disregard whatever is set up in defence against those charges, as much as though nothing had been offered; and thence to make your own decisions. This plan may do with some for ought I know; but, Sir, it will not pass with me, nor, I hope, with the public and the legislature.

I have taken the pains to select from the second part of your Hints, 'five distinct charges' of this kind which you bring forward; and in which are contained 'as many palpable falsehoods,' which must attach themselves either to you or to me.—And as it is high time to discover to whom they belong, I hope you will think with me, that the investigation of this point hath a prior claim to every other.—If you can make good

your several charges I shall fall under them. If not, they are your own: and in this case, all your high professions of morality will be found to carry a correspondence with the rejection of what you call 'the unitarian hypothesis.'

And that there may be no possibility of mistake, I shall not adopt your plan of mere assertions, unsupported by evidence: but produce real matters of fact, which will be found stubborn things; and, in doing this I shall bring forward all your charges, one by one, and in your own words. To each of these separately, my defence shall follow: and when both are before the public and the legislature, to whom you appeal, and before whom, in all my future correspondence with you, I shall consider myself virtually as appearing, let that public and legislature be the arbiter to determine on whose side the truth is.

I have to regret, that in the accomplishment of this service, I shall be necessarily obliged to go over again some part of the ground already trodden.—But as the pursuit of truth is the object, the importance of the thing itself will, I hope, carry with it its own apology.

CHARGE I.

ON THE SUBJECT OF ABUSE.

Page 4, Part II. Hints.—You say, 'I was prepared to expect all the low and senseless ribaldry which this sect of gospel ministers have poured forth; I knew that with them abuse would supply the place of argument, and that foul-mouthed calumny would be substituted for serious investigation.—These illogical and unruly saints (you say) have shewn how much easier it is to revile than to refute:—these pious pontiffs never condescend to prove their assertions. They deal out their condemnation with the air of persons, who can neither

deceive nor be deceived. It is curious to observe the tone of authority with which they send forth their excommunications into the commonwealth of literature. They never condescend to produce any evidence to testify that their invectives are not wholly without foundation.—They seem to claim a prescriptive right to libel all who hold an opinion opposite to their own. —These evangelical dissenters exercise, as by charter, a right to differ from others in matters of faith, and to abuse and vilify all that differ from them.—Whoever doth not subscribe to [their doctrines] must expect a plentiful sprinkling of abuse, from the shower bath of Calvinism.—I can assure these mortified priests that I have a very cool contempt for their abuse; but I would caution them in future not to shew so much of the cloven foot, &c. &c.'

ANSWER.

As far as I am implicated in this charge, I would beg to ask in what page or paragraph of my former letter, or in any of my writings, are such calumniating passages to be found? I am wholly unconscious of having merited such reproach. It hath always been in my view, the truest symptom of a bad cause, when anger is put in the place of reason, and abuse supplies the want of argument. And I should blush indeed, if the charge could be proved in a single instance in myself.

I said in my former letter (page 8,) that, though our sentiments were hostile 'on this most interesting of all subjects; and injurious as, in my apprehensions, your tenets are to the best interests of man; yet in exposing the fallacy of your arguments, and defending what is dearer to me than life, I shall study to preserve the utmost decorum. If I err on this ground, it will not be intentionally;' and I added, that I should seek resources no where, but in the principles of the pure faith itself to defend them.

Now, let it be determined on which side truth is.—If there be in any of my writings, or in the whole, put them together, any thing like the abuse copied but from a page or two of the Barrister's Hints: in this case his charge holds good. But if not, what shall such a charge be called?—Let the public say—

CHARGE II.

ON OUR AVERSION TO MORALITY.

Pages 7, 8, Part II. Hints.—'Their contempt of morality (you say) is so extreme, that their vulgar vocabulary, ample as it is, can scarcely furnish them with epithets sufficiently abusive for its advocate. One should have thought that they would have manifested somewhat of the christian virtue of mildness, if it were only out of compliment, not to their adversary, but to themselves and their cause. But it seems they have no desire to be respected even for this solitary virtue. One can get from them neither pleasure nor profit. All claim to merit is so utterly discarded from their humble pretensions, that they really seem to be vain of their ill-deserving.'

ANSWER.

Page 13, former letter.—'We contend, Sir, and upon the most convincing evidence we prove also, in the lives and conversation of all that are real partakers of grace, that it is 'a doctrine after godliness.' Every thing that is amiable is included in it, as referring to all the great branches of moral and religious practice. And we challenge the world to the strictest scrutiny into the conduct of those who really, and truly, and heartily receive the doctrines, so as to live under their blessed influence, whether they are not 'examples of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.'"

'It is impossible, indeed, it should be otherwise, for it cannot fail of its effect in a single instance. If a saving change from God's Holy Spirit hath passed upon the heart, the sure consequence must follow. And you will be pleased, Sir, to remember, that to the accomplishment of this one great design, the whole tendency of evangelical preaching, as an instrument in the hand of God, is directed.'

'Before I take leave of this part of my answer to your Hints, I beg, Sir, that it may be noticed by you, that I contend for this, as one that contendeth for a plain matter of fact. The doctrines of grace, wherever they are received into the heart, have a blessed tendency to reform the morals of mankind. And their gracious influences do appear in the conscientious observance of what the apostle so sweetly enjoins; "whatsoever things are true: whatsoever things are honest: whatsoever things are just: whatsoever things are pure: whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report."'

Here again, let decision be given with whom the truth is: with both it is impossible! This point, indeed, involves in it a double falsehood, not simply the charge of being immoral; but the charge of desiring to be thought so. And thus, at the very time when we are contending that the doctrine of grace is the doctrine after godliness, and challenging the world to the strictest scrutiny into the lives of its professors, even then we are said to be so averse to all claim of merit, that 'we seem to be vain of our ill-deserving!'

CHARGE III.

ON SHRINKING FROM THE INVESTIGATION OF OUR DOCTRINES.

Page 16, Part II. Hints.—'You can never get (you say) a plain answer to a plain question. Ask them in

the midst of their harangue, to explain any difficulty that ariseth out of their doctrines, and they lead you into the wilderness of mystery, lose themselves and you in a maze of texts without connection, and terms without meaning; and, after all, like dancers in a minuet, they end where they began.'

'He has totally omitted to explain on what ground it is he vindicates his public declaration, that he shall not recommend human strength to exert itself in acts of moral virtue towards its own salvation. He has not attempted to prove that man is wholly incapable of doing any thing toward his own reformation.'

'He has adduced no authority from the gospel to warrant his declaring that the salvation of mankind is not suspended on the performance of their moral duties: that the gospel hath neither if's nor but's, neither terms nor conditions. He has shrunk from the examination of every passage of scripture which was produced in opposition to this doctrine, of all others, the most delusive and the most dangerous.'

ANSWER.

Pages 15, 16, former letter.—'If, according to your apprehension of the persuasiveness of moral preaching, it is fully competent to induce a reform among all ranks and orders of the people; will you, or can you explain, why it is, that it should so uniformly fail of its end: and even in cases where it is fostered, and countenanced with all the auxiliaries which might tend to give it energy?—I refer now particularly to the higher ranks of men, where, from the many advantages of circumstances and education, we might reasonably hope, if any where, to find the most illustrious examples of it.'

'Certainly, Sir, there must be some latent cause, some other repulsive power operating, and which you have not taken into the account, but which remains to be discovered, to explain wherefore it is that things are

so.—If you have any candour you must allow, that not all the eloquence of moral preaching, joined with all the eloquence of self-interest, and under circumstances the most promising from refinement and education; and circumstances the most alarming from the consideration of personal safety; yet all unitedly taken together have not been found sufficient to give a new bias to the human heart, but have lost their effect.'

'Moral preaching may propose precepts, but possesseth no power to enforce them—and the conclusion will be—that somewhat higher, and more persuasive than mere human power, is competent to the remedy.' Page 19, *ibid.*

'Will you feel indignant at this account, and tell me that you know many that are exceptions to this general statement? I can tell you the same. But to whom, or to what cause shall we put this down? Not to the effects of moral preaching: not to the inherent worth of the human heart, as many have fondly supposed: not to habits of education: not to trainment: not to example. Under all these circumstances do we not frequently see the breakings out of the natural mind, when it can no longer brook restraint?—To what then shall those exceptions be ascribed?—The answer is at hand.—To that preventing and restraining grace, of which you think so little, and I desire to think so highly; which, like the hidden spring of a machine, acts most when least perceived.—It is to this first cause we are taught, by an authority not to be doubted, all that vast difference is to be referred, which marks the character of "him that serveth God from him that serveth not."' Page 18. *ibid.*

Now let the question be determined, whether I totally omitted to explain the leading doctrine of the gospel, which in every part declares the incompetency of human strength to effect its own salvation? And whether in a compendious manner I could have adopted

a better method of demonstrating, according to the system of redemption by Christ, the absolute necessity of grace because nature is defective? What more decisive authority can the scripture give, than when it saith, (according to what I have endeavoured to shew) that "We are not sufficient of ourselves to do any thing as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God?" 2 Cor. iii. 5.

CHARGE IV.

ON DECLINING ALL INQUIRY CONCERNING THE NEW BIRTH.

Pages 19 to 23, Part II. Hints.—'The Doctor talks (you say) a great deal about the new birth: but he evades, as usual, any explanation of what is meant by it. He finds an apology, however, for this omission: it is a curious one, but as it was probably the best he could offer, it becomes matter of courtesy to accept it. I shall not stay to enquire (saith he) at this time in *what*, according to the analogy of scripture, this new birth consists.*—But the Doctor is one of those power-

* Pardon me, Sir, if, by way of note, (that I may not break in upon the general subject) I presume to make a short remark upon the definition which you have given of the *new birth*. You say, (page 23.) 'Since this renowned champion of methodism,' (here is no foul-mouthed calumny to be sure in this) 'will not stay to inquire in what this new birth consists, I will devote a page or two to supply the omission occasioned by his *want of leisure*,' (which, by the by, never was pleaded.) 'I do this the more readily,' (you add) 'because the delusive jargon that is abroad on this subject, gives it a strong claim on the attention of considerate and reflective minds.' I hope the reader will not overlook the great condescension of the considerate and reflective mind of our Barrister; for this condescension, it is evident, arose from the strong claim the ignorant and uninformed had upon a mind so competent as his, in order to rescue the world from the delusive jargon that is abroad upon this subject; and therefore he attended to the universal wants of mankind in this particular the more readily! After this exordium, in which the expectation of the public mind, and the legislature too, may be sufficiently excited to be on the look-out for somewhat beyond the common routine of things, and such as never had been brought to light before, he thus lays down the doctrine of the new birth: 'The true meaning,' (you say) 'of being born again, in the sense in which our Saviour uses the phrase, implies nothing more or less, in plain terms, than this—TO REPENT—to lead for the future a religious life, instead of a life of

ful adversaries that contends as successfully without the art of reasoning or argument, as if he were ever so well

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disobedience—to believe the holy scriptures, and to pray for grace and assistance to persevere in our obedience to the end.' Having thus finished your definition of the new birth, you add, 'all this any man of common sense might explain in a few words.'

And thus, Sir, you would have *any man of common sense* believe that our Lord meant nothing more or less by the new birth than to tell Nicodemus that he must *repent*. And the poor Jew was so struck with astonishment at the doctrine, as a thing never heard of before, notwithstanding the whole volume of the Jewish scriptures had been all along exhorting to the same, that he cried out as one that considered the thing impossible; "How can these things be?" Moreover, that this man of common sense concluded from Christ's telling him that he must repent, that in order to it he must enter "the second time into his mother's womb," that he might—what?—*repent*. Really, Sir, you have 'devoted a page or two' to a very important purpose in the use you have of them. And the *strong claim* that was upon your *very considerate and reflective mind*, hath been most completely satisfied! Do you really think that there *is a man upon earth of common sense*, that can accept this interpretation of your's concerning the new birth? Nay, Sir, I would ask, do you really believe it yourself? Indeed, indeed, I give you credit for a better understanding. And I venture to think, that the folly of such an idea will from henceforth strike your mind, that you will have a *new thought* upon the subject, and *repent* all the days of your life for having committed yourself by such an interpretation, to the derision of every man *of common sense* that shall read it. Had any of the 'pious pontiffs' you so contemptuously speak of, advanced any thing so childish, you would have said, 'These illogical and unruly saints contend as successfully without the aid of reason or argument, as if they were ever so well seconded.' But, Sir, we must not stop here. Much as I am astonished at the boldness of your *doctrine*, in the interpretation of the sense of our Lord's words; I admire the freedom of your *translation* of the words themselves more. If it were not for raising your choler, I should be tempted to say, you surely never did construe a passage in the Greek testament before. For if any school-boy in the kingdom had so rendered the words γεννηθη ανωθεν, as you have done, he ought to be chastised. What, Sir! is there no difference between the verbs Μετανοεω, *to repent*, and Γενναομαί, *to be born?* To make these synonimous, is a freedom of translation unknown in any school! But I fear you understand neither.

Nor is this all. For even, if we admit a thing so preposterous, a greater difficulty is yet behind. What is to become of the adverb ανωθεν? Every one knows, that knows any thing of the original, that ανωθεν can have but one general sense, *superne a summo*. It must literally mean *from above*. And did you mean, Sir, that we must repent *from above?* I fear you will be loth to allow this, for this would endanger another of your doctrines, by admitting the agency of the Holy Spirit. But, Sir, the two words, the verb and adverb are joined; γεννηθν ανωθεν, is the phrase in our testament; and therefore the sense can be no other; we must "be born again," or *born from above;* the doctrine is the same. And in confirmation of it, whoever will turn to their Greek testament, will find this same adverb, ανωθεν, which in this passage, (John iii. 3.) when joined to the verb γεννηθη, is rendered *born again*, is in John iii. 31. and John xix. 11. rendered *from above:* intimating as plain as words can render

seconded. The most acute logician could not manage matters more triumphantly. 'Let this new birth (says he) be what it may, the very admission of the thing itself throws to the ground all your high-flown notions of the competency of morality, to the full correction of the minds and manners of the people! What close and cogent reasoning is here! Talk of Locke and Leibnitz! The Vicar of Charles beats them hollow!!!' '

ANSWER.

Pages 20—23, former letter. — 'If there be one doctrine of the gospel more plainly revealed, and more forcibly insisted upon than another, it is that which the Son of God himself taught, namely, the regeneration of the heart. This was the grand feature, which was to mark the mercy of God, in the latter day dispensation. The great Redeemer of mankind was promised under these glorious distinctions of character. He was not only to "take away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" but he was to take away the love of sin, and the dominion of sin, out of the minds of his redeemed, by "forming within them a new nature." And this regeneration of the heart was to form a most unequivocal and decided testimony of the character of the people of God in all ages of his church.

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the expressions, that they are one and the same; being *born again*, is being born *from above*. And consequently, it is neither the repentance nor the act of man, but the work of God. As in the original birth of nature, so in the new birth of grace, God is the author of both.

Were 'the renowned champion of methodism,' disposed to rail, here is full room for the exercise of it. But no, Sir; it is sufficient with me to refute by argument. Other weapons shall be your's, if you please. And whether the Vicar of Charles hath, as you say, beat hollow either Locke, or Leibnitz, or both; *every man of common sense* will confess, that what I said in my last letter concerning the new birth, was neither illogical nor improper. If these great men could look up from their ashes, they would be as much displeased with your *art of right reasoning*, as every living grammarian must be with your want of *art in false translating*. But doth not the whole strike you with some degree of conviction, to what miserable expedients men of abilities, such as yourself, (for I am most ready to acknowledge all you have) are reduced, when to support any dogma they take up, common sense, if needful, must be sacrificed!

'Whoever reads our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus upon this subject, will immediately discover, in what strong terms the Redeemer speaks of it, and points out the indispensable necessity of this great change taking place in the hearts of his followers. Every thing important seems folded up in it. The greatest stress is laid upon it. So momentous a thing is it made, by Jesus, that he declares without it there can be no entrance into his kingdom. And whatever other blessed effects were to follow, in the practical fruits of christianity, in the lives of his disciples; this, as the first, the bottom, the foundation of every other, is laid in it: "Ye must be born again."

'I am no stranger, Sir, to all that sceptics have said, and still continue to say, against this doctrine. —But after all the presumptuous reasonings of the human heart, — the truth stands still, where Jesus placed it, at the foot of his gospel: the portal opens with no other :—"Ye must be born again."

'I shall not stay to inquire at this time in what, according to the analogy of scripture, this new birth consists.* This might be easily done, and hath indeed,

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* Every man of candour that read these words in my former letter, must have been led to conclude, from the manner in which I expressed myself, that if I staid not to explain, according to my view, in what the doctrine of the new birth doth consist; it was not because I wished to avoid the subject, or because of the difficulty attending it; but because I would not unnecessarily swell the page of controversy on a point not more immediately connected with the subject of our dispute, than any other of the grand and distinguishing truths of the gospel. And beside all this, I considered that the doctrine itself hath already received every possible illustration from the number of able writers which have been engaged in the explanation of it. But had I thought that my opponent would have acted so ungenerously, as to pervert my silence into a construction, that I 'evaded it as usual' (as he is pleased to say); I certainly would have devoted, *not a page or two*, but a line or two at least, on the subject. And this not with a view to have given *my* illustration indeed; but the plain and familiar illustration of one, whose word ought to be final and decisive with all parties.

For my own part I have always considered the words of our Lord on the subject of the new birth, as carrying with them their own comment, and requiring nothing, so far as the decision of the doctrine itself goes, as further explanatory. "Ye must be born again." Hence a new birth requires a new nature.

been already done, times without number, and in a way which cannot but prove conclusive and satisfactory, with all candid minds. All that is necessary is to establish the fact itself. There must be a new birth—the Son of God himself decides the point. And therefore, Sir, notwithstanding all the plausibility of your reasoning, moral virtue, in its highest attainments, comes short of the salvation of the soul.'

Re-generation certainly implies this. Παλιγγενεσία, is one of the plainest words in the Greek language, being evidently compounded of παλιν, signifying *again*, and γενεσις, *generation*, which when joined together form the noun, Παλιγγενεσία, (the nearest literal translation of which is, *again generated; re*-generated, or born again. Hence, therefore, the very reiteration of any act, be that act what it may, implies that it is doing a thing which hath been done before. And as the original generation of our nature is plainly and allowedly the sole work of God, so the *re*-generation of our nature must be his also.

'According to this doctrine,' (said Mr. Polwhele, in his controversy with me) 'our regeneration depends not in the slightest degree upon ourselves.' No! indeed, answered I, it certainly doth not. How could you ever suppose such a thing? Pray, Sir, had you a hand in your original generation? any will, any knowledge, any desire concerning it? And if not, why should it be at all more extraordinary, your being altogether passive in your new birth? Besides, in fact, if man had a hand in this new birth, it could not properly be called *re*-generation. For surely a man could not be said to *repeat*, what he had never done before. The new birth in this case, would lose the very name of *re*-generation. But if God that generates our nature, be pleased to form that nature anew in Christ Jesus: then, the acts being both his, the new birth is properly what scripture defines it—*re*-generation; and both are shewn to result from the free and sovereign pleasure of God in Christ."

Now if men would attend more to the plain words of scripture, and less to the presumptuous reasonings of the human mind, they would get nearer the truth upon all occasions.

It is the distinguishing character by which the scriptures have marked the regenerate, that "they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 14. And to define, if possible, still more accurately, the character of the divine agency in this work, as distinguished from any co-operation with human power, the opposite properties of each are distinctly set down: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit," John iii. 6. And moreover, to demonstrate how free and spontaneous this mercy is, on the part of God; and how wholly unexpected and undeserved, on the part of man; this work of God upon the soul, in the act of regeneration, is compared to the unknown source of the air, which "bloweth where it listeth." For, as we hear the sound of the air, and see, and feel its effects, while all the while we are unconscious "whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so, (saith the Lord Jesus, adopting this beautiful figure by way of illustrating the doctrine of the new birth) is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8.

After so copious a statement of the fact, as it concerns this *fourth* charge, I think it unnecessary to enlarge. Having brought forward both sides of the argument, I pray that judgment may be given, with whom the truth is, whether I 'evaded, as usual, every explanation concerning the new birth!'

CHARGE V.

ON DECLINING ALL EXPLANATION RESPECTING THE COVENANT.

Pages 14, 15, Part II. Hints.—'It behoved the Doctor to shew,—which he has wholly omitted—in what manner a covenant can exist without terms or conditions. The very supposition is absurd: and a man must either think very superficially, or not think at all, that, on a subject requiring the deepest consideration, can advance positions so childish and contradictory.

'He has not in any manner referred to the gospel to support his doctrine, that pardon, mercy, and peace, are unconditionally bestowed, by virtue of an everlasting covenant, which cannot be frustrated by human folly, and which man cannot by any after-act destroy. If this doctrine of an everlasting, unconditional covenant, really exists in the gospel, it would surely not be difficult to point it out. But this divine offers the difficulty itself, as an excuse for evading it. It would be the work of a distinct treatise, (he saith) and not the subject of a letter. The Doctor's admirers may be satisfied with this kind of *reasoning*—it is in *their way*—it is a dexterous mode of getting rid of the objector, without replying to the objection. But he leaves me to make myself informed on this subject. Really this mode of defence is admirable. He advances a doctrine as fundamentally true, which has, in fact, no foundation at all; and when called upon to support it, he throws the *onus probandi* on his opponent.

ANSWER.

Pages 32—34, former letter.—' It is with regret that I complain. But another part of your pamphlet meets my eye, which calls it forth. Whether you affect to be ignorant, or whether it be real, I know not: but the observations you make concerning the covenant of grace only serve to shew that you are as little acquainted with your bible as you are with the laws respecting evangelical preaching. I thought you on that account a miserable Barrister: but here you manifest that you are a worse divine.

' If you were more conversant with your bible than your pamphlet shews you are, you would have discovered, that the sacred writers, are perpetually dwelling upon this important part of revelation—of the everlasting covenant. I would send you therefore to the examination of the word of God, that you may first discover this, and be fully certified in your own mind, that there is such a thing revealed from heaven, as the everlasting covenant.

' When you have made yourself well informed of this as a fact, I would then desire you to ask yourself (for I write now for your information, not my own,) what construction *you* would put upon the term everlasting. If you think at all, you must conclude that a covenant that is in its nature *everlasting*, could not commence in *time:* and consequently creatures of time, such as we are, could have no hand in it.

' When you have advanced these steps in the climax of our subject, you may next be told, that according to your own views of a covenant, that it must be between parties, so there are two parties to this. And who should constitute parties in an everlasting covenant, but the everlasting God? Yes, Sir, Jehovah, existing in a plurality of persons, hath formed this gracious compact. So that, here is God the Father, graciously engaging to

bestow such and such blessings of redemption, in consequence of God the Son's undertaking to fulfil all righteousness, and to expiate all the penal effects of sin for his people. And here is God the Son, as graciously undertaking, and as gloriously accomplishing both to make the covenant complete and sure. This is the plan of grace; this is the *magna charta* of the gospel. And a covenant founded in grace, and originating and completed in mercy, may well be called, as the word of God hath called it, an everlasting covenant.'

From the comparative view of this *fifth* charge with my answer, the public will now determine on which side the truth is.—The question is not, whether the everlasting covenant be indeed absurd, and the 'positions concerning it childish and contradictory,' as my opponent ventures to speak. For these things belong to the covenant itself, and are of too high moment to be brought under human decision. This is not even to be mentioned in the same subject, which hath a reference to him or me. But the simple question, in order to ascertain with whom is the truth, turns on this one point, whether I did, or did not, 'wholly omit the statement of the covenant; offering the difficulty of explaining as an excuse for evading it?' The public will decide, and their judgment with me will be final.

I must not leave the subject, however, before I have once more apologized to the tribunal to whom I have referred this cause for the many and large selections which I have made in this *second* letter from what was so recently sent forth to their inspection in my *first*. But I hope indeed, that I am already pardoned on this ground. The expediency of the measure, hath, I trust in some degree, borne me out, and pleaded for me. And the generosity of the public mind, always earnest in the discovery of truth, hath met me more than half way with their indulgence in this particular.

An opponent, who, in the face of a publication so

very recent, could venture to bring forward charges of omissions and evasions; and while using very acrimonious language himself, complain of a scurrility which not a line of mine is marked with, could be answered in no other way than by such a direct reference in proof, to the pamphlets on each side, as I have adopted. The simple statement of facts must always prove the best refutation of untruth.

And although in the accomplishment of this purpose, I have (much against my inclination) unavoidably increased the pages of my present letter with quotations from the *former;* yet it should be considered, as some little further apology, that by this means I have thereby rendered references, (unless for the confirmation of authenticity) to the writings themselves on both sides unnecessary. And by thus concentring both my opponent's charge and my defence into one point of view, the decision of the main question is made more readily attainable.

Resting then, with full confidence in the public pardon, for the reduplication contained in this letter; and waiting with very cheerful hope, the issue of the public verdict to determine with whom the truth is; I take leave of this part of the subject, the object for this digression (if it can be called one) being very fully answered.

But, Sir, might I venture to trespass a little longer on the public patience, before that I prosecute the more important subject, for which this controversy hath been opened, it would be not simply to defend, but to appeal; not to exonerate myself from unjust charges, but to complain of unjust treatment.—I would beg, indeed, to interest the common candour, the common charity of every looker-on of our dispute, whether friend or foe to the general question of right or wrong on the doctrine, to do me that justice which you refuse. Let the greatest enemy upon earth to evangelical principles

read my little publication, entiled, 'a Prop against all Despair,' as it is in itself, and let him judge between us, if there ever was a greater perversion of an author's design or subject, than you have made of it. Sir, if the word of God itself was to be so garbled and torn, it might be made a libel: nay, it might be made to speak the very reverse of all its sacred contents.

I had thought that the reflection of a cool hour, when the effervescence of your anger had a little subsided, would have caused you to have listened to the justness of my expostulation on this subject.—I did indeed conclude, that after the appeal I made to your integrity, in my former letter; your *second* publication would have brought with it some apology at least by way of reparation for the injury done to it in your *first*.——But I reckoned upon false premises, when I formed them upon the high professions you made of moral uprightness, unfounded in divine grace. Men may *talk* of entering into life by keeping the commandments, in the very moment of breaking them by *deeds!*

But, Sir, I cease to remonstrate with you on this ground. You have added wound to wound, on this little production of mine; and having stabbed it in every part, you have cast it forth to be buried.——And there let it rest, as far as my correspondence with you is concerned, until the morning of the resurrection.—Then there will be a re-hearing of the cause.—And then, all its merits or demerits, will be ascertained, with a precision that shall silence for ever the complaints both of the accuser and the accused.

It is no doubt among the many excellent properties of our happy constitution, that in the little *offences* which our Lord saith *will come*, and which, from the infirmities of our nature, we are not unfrequently giving or receiving in life, that no man should be allowed to estimate the extent of the injuries he sustains by his own feelings. For in that case it is very

obvious, damages would be laid upon very trifling occasions, in the warmth of a moment, to a great amount. But though no man be permitted by the law of the land, to state the precise degree of recompence to which he might consider himself entitled, under ill-treatment; yet every man must have the freedom, in his own breast, to form a comparative statement of greater or less injuries which he receives, as they affect himself. And I solemnly protest, according to my view of things in the ratio of offences, the robber of my house, or of my pocket, is a man of virtue, considered as to the injury he doth me, compared to the robber of my reputation. A few figures will mark down, and a little arithmetic sum up the total amount of the one injury, and a little time do the whole evil of it away. But the turpitude of the other is incalculable: and especially in those instances where a man's usefulness is circumscribed by the deed. The design of the action, as well as the action itself, must all be taken into the account!

> Scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum,
> Facti crimen habet——— JUVEN. SAT. 13.

But I drop this, and every other subject of a private nature, to attend to one infinitely more important in itself, and of universal consequence.

Hitherto, since I began this letter, I have for the most part been looking at what may be called causes, in their effects. *Abuse* and *false crimination* and *charges*, and the like, which arise out of certain principles that give birth to them.—It will be proper now to trace effects to their cause, and consequences to their source.

In the acknowledgment, which you have at length thought proper to make of your unitarian faith, the hatred shewn by you to evangelical principles, is at once explained. It would have shortened many a page in our controversy had you done it before.

That I may not err in the acceptation of your creed, I shall state it in your own words. You say, (page 73, Part 2, Hints) 'The appellation of unitarian, imports no more than the rejection of the trinitarian hypothesis.' Sir, there needs no more. A volume could not define the character more accurately. Indeed, it is this precise feature, of despising the glorious doctrine of Jehovah, existing in a trinity of Persons, which peculiarly marks the unitarian sect. For in the rejection of what you call the 'Trinitarian hypothesis,' is chiefly, and principally implied, the denial of the Godhead of Christ. There are several other particularities which form parts of the faith of the unitarian, (as I shall have ample occasion in our future correspondence to shew, when I come to place that system 'in all its bearings') but it is the denial of the divinity of the Son of God, by which, above every other, the unitarian is notoriously distinguished.

And I consider it particularly favourable to the proper apprehension of the subject, that you should have given in the principles of your creed, under the leading and comprehensive phrase of 'one who rejects the Trinitarian hypothesis.' For this is the very one, of all others, by which he is known. He cannot, indeed, be so specifically characterised among christians, by any other, as by this. For the worshippers of "One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity," may in a certain sense, be said to be both trinitarians and unitarians. "We desire grace, (saith one of our church prayers, collect for Trinity Sunday, in the book of Common Prayer) by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity; and in the power of the Divine Majesty, to worship the Unity."—But though, in this sense, trinitarians may also be called unitarians; yet, you know, as well as I, that this is not the sense in which the modern use of the term unitarian is considered. The universal acceptation of the word

unitarian, through every part of Christendom, means, *one that denies the* Godhead of Christ. And this, I presume, Sir, if you were to speak out, is what you mean. For no one who believes in Christ's Godhead, would choose to speak so irreverently of the glorious doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, as to call it a 'Trinitarian hypothesis.'

If I err in this interpretation of your own words, (though that seems impossible) there is an easy remedy in your next publication, by which the effect will be immediately done away. It will be only for you, on the back of your title-page, or in any other conspicuous part of you pamphlet, to have it inserted in large characters:

"I believe in the Godhead of Christ,"—and gladly, very gladly, will I strike off the term unitarian from your name, and hail you as a worshipper of the Lord Jesus.—But until this be done, I must suppose you, according to your own definition of an unitarian, 'one who rejects (what you call) the Trinitarian hypothesis;' and consequently, one who denies the Godhead of Christ.*

It becomes, therefore, no longer the subject of surprize, that writings like mine should offend you. Strange indeed would it be, and a sad proof of their deficiency in every thing that is truly interesting in

* 'According to your opinion,' (said Mr. Porter, the unitarian teacher, in his attack of my sermons on the Godhead of Christ) 'unitarianism is of little or no importance in christianity.' Indeed, (said I in answer) you say right: it hath but little of christianity in it. For with the testimony of the apostles in view, when I behold a religion whose principal features bear so striking a resemblance to that departure from the faith, which they predicted should distinguish the last days: teaching sinners to deny "the Lord that bought them:" to deny *the influences of the Spirit:* and to mutilate the divine word, by the denial *of a plenary inspiration*: of such a religion, it is not in my esteem sufficient to say, that it is of little or no importance: for I conceive it to be injurious to our dearest and best interests. For it robs the Redeemer of his Godhead and atonement: the Holy Ghost of all his precious offices, whereby believers are said to be "sealed unto the day of redemption:" and by rendering the authority of scripture precarious and uncertain, makes the word of God of none effect.'—Letter to Dr. Porter, in answer to his defence of unitarianism.

religion, if they did not. I constantly expect the countenance of an unitarian to redden with resentment, whenever that faith is earnestly contended for, "which was once delivered to the saints." (Jude 3.) All this is right, very right, and exactly corresponds to what I wish it to be. I know not whether you will give me credit for what I say; but whether you will or not, such is the fact: your disapprobation of my writings, after the avowal you have made of your unitarian faith, is with me the most finished compliment. I accept it indeed as a more decided testimonial of being right, than if many commendations had been given me from an opposite quarter. And although I complain, and cannot but complain, of the butchery you have committed upon my little work, yet your hatred of it, convinces me of its truth and usefulness. I am more gratified with this proof, than if others had given applause. Your *anathema*, is far preferable in my esteem to the *imprimatur* of all the chancellors of every university in the world!

Men of your religious views, who read the word of God through the medium of unitarian optics, may be expected to say all that you have said, in the 62d and 63d pages of the second part of your Hints: though to use your own words, and never surely were they more applicable, 'while others pause with terror, you leap blindfold.'

Yes, Sir, I can now read all that you have written on the sublime truths of the gospel, without being any longer astonished at the impiety of the expressions, though not without trembling for the everlasting welfare of the writer. I can hear you assert, the DEATH OF CHRIST to be of no other virtue or efficacy, than as a WITNESS TO THE TRUTH OF HIS MISSION: and all that is said concerning the BLOOD OF SPRINKLING, to be meant only FIGURATIVELY! I can behold the desperate attempt you make, to annihilate at a blow,

all the hopes and comforts of the whole christian world, when you assert that CHRIST DYING FOR OUR SALVATION, hath for its object, SALVATION ONLY BY OUR OWN GOOD WORKS: and that here also, as in the former instance, it is with A FIGURE OF SPEECH EQUALLY CORRECT, WE ARE SAID TO HAVE REDEMPTON THROUGH HIS BLOOD.—I can hear you say this—though astonished at the boldness of the assertion, in the face of the apostle's own declaration immediately connected with it, when he subjoins to REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD — THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE. (Eph. i. 7.)

I can hear you, amidst many other palpable perversions of the plain truths of God, give the flattest denial to the great doctrine of atonement, to which *the cloud of witnesses* recorded in the bible, and *the multitude in heaven* whom John saw, gave like testimony also that "they had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 14.)

And while both volumes of scripture declare that the Lord laid on "Him the iniquity of us all; that Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree when he died, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God;" (Isaiah liii. 6. 1 Peter ii. 24. iii. 18.) you say, the doctrine that CHRIST CAME TO REDEEM SINNERS FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF ALL INIQUITY BY SUFFERING IN THEIR STEAD—IS NOT TRUE!!!

All these bold and profane expressions I can hear you utter, without astonishment, when I consider that they cannot but form a part in the same creed, which hath for its leading article, THE DENIAL OF THE GODHEAD OF CHRIST.—And I can hear them unmoved also, as far as they go to obscure the divine glory, or darken the hopes of human happiness; for ultimately they can affect neither.—But I cannot hear them unmoved, nor indeed but with the most painful

apprehensions, as they involve in them the awful and tremendous consequences which must follow such foul ingratitude and impiety!

No doubt it frequently strikes the mind of pious and meek believers with wonder, that such profane liberties, as from age to age have been taken with the great and distinguishing truths of the gospel, and in the present day are brought forward with increasing boldness, should escape with impunity. One might indeed be led to expect, the daring conduct would at once expose to the severest reprehension of men, as well as call forth the dreadful displeasure of Almighty God!

But, Sir, you have assigned a reason, whence it is that these things do not come under the cognizance of earthly laws. And the scriptures afford still more satisfying causes why it is, that they are not immediately punished by an heavenly tribunal.

You tell us, 'That the mild and benevolent principles of the British constitution tolerate all sects, and all systems of faith,' (page 179, Part II. Hints.)—And the word of God takes up the subject on yet higher ground, by informing the church that the existence of heresy, and the opposition thereby made to the truth, are not only permitted but ordained: and that so graciously are they overruled by the Great Head of the church, in ministering to the purposes of his sovereign will and pleasure, as to produce the most beneficial consequences. By this process the faith of the believer in the sequel, is more confirmed, and the divine glory promoted. "There must be heresies (saith an apostle) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. xi. 19.)

And what can more illustriously bring forth the evidences of that unremitting attention, the Lord is manifesting over his people, than when the enemies of the truth are made the undesigning instruments of producing the very reverse of what they intended. And

while they aim at the destruction of the cross, they actually become the means of establishing it. The storm which seemed to threaten nothing but ruin is made to break in blessings over their head. This is what the word of God, in its unequalled energy of expression, calls "taking the wise in their own craftiness." (Job v. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 19.)

Pardon me, Sir, if I venture to make application of this doctrine to the present circumstances of our controversy.

You came forward to the attack of the whole body of evangelical truth, as if by the single prowess of your arm you would demolish all its strong holds, and root out the very name of every thing evangelical from the earth. In the heat of action you have manifested your hatred to all its distinguished principles. The great doctrine of the Holy Trinity, upon which we bottom all, you term (in the lightness of your mind) the 'Trinitarian hypothesis.' The death of Christ, which is the life of his church, you make but a mere witness, as in any other martyr, to the truth of his mission. Redemption by his blood, with you is but a figure of speech. And that grand consolatory doctrine to relieve the conscience of the burthened sinner, that "Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and redeemed his people from the punishment of their iniquity by suffering in their stead—you say, is not true!!

Alarmed by such declarations, and beholding the violent attempts by such means to wrest every thing from us, that is sacred and precious in the gospel of Christ; you have driven us to our bibles, and compelled us to seek direction from the word of God, which but for your opposition would not upon this occasion have been consulted. And there we find the scripture where it is written:—

"But there were false prophets also among the

people, even as there shall be false teachers among you; who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them: and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Peter ii. 1, 2.)

Let any impartial person, any man who could be supposed, if it were possible, to be perfectly unacquainted with the subject of our dispute, and as regardless of the event of it, say with whom the truth is. Let such an one have this prophecy of the word of God put in his hand. Let him be told the age when it was given to the church. Let him consider the period to which it refers. And let every sect of men professing christianity give in the particular and distinguishing tenets of that faith by which each class is known and defined, into his hands also. And let him compare one by one, the scriptural account, with their testimony of themselves, and then say to whom could this prophecy of God apply, but to the unitarian?—Observe the several characters.

First.—The sect of these false teachers is expressly said to be "among the people." There shall be "false teachers among you." So that the persons here referred to, are not jews, not infidels, not deists;—but such as call themselves christians! They are "among you;" that is, come under the general denomination of christians. The unitarian claims to be called christian!

Secondly.—The heresy these teachers among christians bring in, is distinguished with this striking particularity: *denying the Lord that bought them.* Now none but the Lord Jesus is said to have bought the church with his blood. And of him the scriptures uniformly give testimony to this gracious deed. The same apostle who delivered this prophecy to the church, tells the church in his other epistle, that "they were redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious

blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot." (1 Peter i. 18, 19.) To the same effect the apostle John tells the church, that he heard the redeemed in heaven, in their songs of praise, hailing the Redeemer for this very act: "thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) Hence the character of those teachers is strongly defined. They deny the Godhead of Christ: and they deny redemption by his blood. In whom but unitarians do we find these striking particulars of belief? They virtually deny both!

Thirdly.—And "many shall follow their pernicious ways." Yes! for the compliment such doctrines pay to the pride of the human understanding, in setting up our corrupt reason above divine revelation, very much tends to proselyte to their party. Many therefore that follow their pernicious ways, are in consequence of this false light, unconscious for a while of their ruinous tendency.——For what is the unitarian supposed to deny? Not Christ's name nor his mission; for they profess to believe both. They take, in common with others, the title of christians. Nay, they refine upon the name, and affect to call themselves *rational* christians, by way of distinction from those they deem enthusiasts and fanatics. But their denial of the peculiar doctrines of our holy faith is what they desire to recommend themselves by, to men of intellect and discernment, as they value themselves in being thought: and thus their pernicious ways are followed by many, who desire to be ranked above the common horde of the ignorant and the vulgar of mankind.*

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* It is not a little presumptuous, as I have elsewhere remarked, (in my sermons on the Divinity of Christ) in those who are such advocates for the powers of reason, to draw the conclusion which is too generally done by them, as though the mysteries of the gospel were utterly repugnant to it. It is one thing surely to assert, that reason alone is unequal to the discovery of such truths as the christian religion hath revealed; and another to pronounce them inconsistent with each other. While reason acts subordinately to revelation, and with

And lasily.—"By reason of whom (the apostle saith) the way of truth is evil spoken of?" And how can the way of truth be more evil spoken of, than by reducing the person of the great Author of our holy faith to a mere man; and rendering all that is said, concerning the merits and efficacy of his blood, to be a mere figure of speech?

And it will be demanded, after this view of the apostle's prophecy, what becomes of that part of it which saith; "And they bring upon themselves swift

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a proper humility, and diffidence, examines the evidences of its doctrines, they are in harmony together, and both will be found to accord. 'Let reason be kept to (saith Dr. Butler, in his Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion) and if any part of the scripture account of the redemption of the world by Christ, can be shewn to be really contrary to it, let the scripture in the name of God be given up. But let not such poor creatures as we are, go on objecting to an infinite scheme, that we do not see the necessity or usefulness of, in all its parts, and call this reasoning.'

It is under the specious pretence, that reason is competent to determine the measure of religious faith, this class of men have analysed the several parts of revelation by this standard, and have peremptorily rejected every thing beyond the power of reason to account for, as impossible to have come from God. Thus with a rash and bold hand, they have torn from the gospel all the sacred mysteries of our most holy faith, reduced the whole to a mere system of ethics, and degraded the Divine Author of our salvation, to a character no higher than that of a moral teacher, the equal of *Socrates* or *Confucius*. Nay, to such an height hath this doctrine advanced, that one, who when alive had the honour, dangerous honour of pre-eminency in this opinion, declared that the sentiments of an apostle were invalid and of no weight with him. Dr. Priestley (in his History of the early Opinions concerning Christianity) thus expresseth himself: 'As it is not pretended that there are any miracles adapted to prove that Christ made the world, I do not see that we are under any obligation to believe it, merely because it was an opinion held by an apostle.' Page 68, vol. i. And again, page 70, 'It is not, certainly, from a few casual expressions, and especially in *epistolary writings*, that we can be authorised to infer, that such was the serious opinion of the apostles. But if it had been their real opinion, it would not follow *that it was true*, unless the teaching of it should appear to be included in their general commission.' And the same writer, in his letter to Dr. Horseley, part I. page 132, saith—'I have frequently declared myself *not to be a believer in the inspiration of the evangelists and apostles as writers.*'—It is an observation of some note, and deserves to be well regarded, that in the departure of these sectaries from the orthodoxy of the gospel, and in their degrading of the great Author of it, few of them have one standard for their creed. Even those that deny his Godhead, have various opinions concerning his real character. 'Some christians, saith Dr. Price (in his sermons, page 129,) in their opinion of our Lord, have gone so far as even to *have supposed him peccable and fallible*.'

destruction?"—I hope the daring question will not be brought forward, upon the present occasion at least. For so said the scoffers of old. And so are they described as still saying in the latter days of the church; "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—But what saith the man of God in reply? "Beloved, (saith he) be not ignorant of this one thing. One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to us-ward; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii. 3—9.)

Such views of the subject, very fully satisfy my mind on the reason and propriety of the existence of heresies. Truth must be opposed by error: and the shaft of the infidel levelled against the shield of the believer. There is a *needs be* for the whole: and the divine wisdom hath very amply testified both to its expediency and usefulness.

By such means, the peculiar doctrines of our holy faith are brought forward into more open view; their divine authority more firmly established; their suitableness to man, as a fallen creature, more clearly seen; and their infinite importance more cordially and heartily received, and more thankfully acknowledged. The ordeal of opposition, through which they are made to pass, acts only as the heat of the furnace upon pure gold; it loseth nothing by the fire, but comes forth with greater lustre, and brings forth all its weight.

In the mean time, amidst all the rage of persecution, which "the truth as it is in Jesus" hath sustained from age to age, and renewed as it hath been under different assaults, from one period to another; the issue of the contest never hath been, neither ever can be, doubtful. In every point of view, and upon every consideration,

as it regards the divine glory; as it involves in its sure consequences the ruin of the enemies of the cross; and as it tends to the final security and everlasting happiness of the Lord's people: all is arranged with a wisdom which cannot be defeated, and with a power which cannot but prevail; and proves through the whole, and every part of the struggle made against the truth, that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

As far as the divine glory is concerned, all the attempts made by the infidel to dig up the sure foundation stone, which God hath laid in Zion, manifests the impotency of the deed. Nay, every blow levelled at the basis, serves but to uncover more the wonderful building, and to open fuller to view, the eternal nature of that rock, Christ Jesus, on whom the whole superstructure stands, and against which "the gates of hell shall never prevail!"

As far as the enemies of God and of his Christ are concerned, they are most awfully concerned. This "stone of stumbling," and this "rock of offence," which was "cut out without hands," and of which the prophet declared, that "it should smite every image" in its way, become "a great mountain, and fill the earth:" (Daniel ii. 34—45.) we have lived to see already the prediction in part fulfilled. For while the Babylonian, the Persian, Grecian, and Roman powers, as was then said, should be broken in pieces by it and consumed, the kingdom of Jesus still flourisheth amidst all opposition, and must flourish until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah xi. 9.) In the mean time, the hand that is daringly put forth against the Godhead of its Divine Author, like the impious monarch at Bethel, will wither in the attempt. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Matt. xxi. 44.)

And as far as the everlasting welfare of the people of God is concerned, nothing can be more permanent and sure. He that laid in Zion for a foundation, "this tried stone, this precious corner stone," said, at the same time, "he that believed on him should not be confounded." (Isaiah xxviii. 16, with 1 Peter ii. 6.) Every effort of the infidel to shake his faith, will therefore only tend to confirm it the more. For it will lead him, under a conscious sense of his own weakness, to seek aid in the divine strength; and the issue will carry with it greater conviction to his heart, that "his faith doth not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. ii.—5.)

But, Sir, though these considerations are in themselves perfectly satisfactory, in enabling the church to account for the existence of heresy, at the same time they serve to reconcile the faithful to any exercises which may arise out of it: yet some other collateral cause must be looked for, before a sufficient reason can be assigned for the singularity of *your* conduct upon this occasion.

The very peculiar nature of the attack, which you have thought proper to make upon me, is, as far as I have hitherto heard or read, without precedent. I am literally impeached by you for my faithful adherence to the doctrines of the church of England, to which I have subscribed, and which form the articles of the established religion of the country.

Let the case be stated as it really is, and it is enough to stagger the credibility of mankind.—Here is one, who under the specious appearance of a friend to the church, declares himself an open enemy to her most distinguishing doctrines. One who scruples not to call himself 'unitarian,' and yet would have the world believe that he is earnest to support the principles of the church, whose whole creed and liturgy are trinitarian; one who, not content with the freedom of declaring

openly his own religious sentiments, insults the constitution under which he enjoys that freedom, by profanely calling the first and leading doctrine of the church of England, a 'Trinitarian hypothesis;' one whose faith, in tenderness to his own conscience, is merely tolerated, winked at by the laws of the land, comes forward with unblushing confidence to impugn a minister of the establishment, for preaching the very doctrines which the law itself hath appointed, and which at his ordination, he was set apart to support.—And this man not only comes forward to criminate on this ground, but actually calls upon the legislature to devise some method for putting a stop to the propagation of those very truths, which that legislature, in its wisdom, hath for many successive generations established; is now, in its fostering care, watching over; and in the justification of its own authority, cannot but support.

Such an attempt as this was never before heard of! It forms an outrage, not only upon common law, but common sense. It is indeed a phenomenon in history, reserved for the opening of the *nineteenth* century; and stands without parallel in the annals of any country whatever!

Had you, Sir, been able to have shewn, though but in a single instance, that I had departed, either in my preaching or my writings, from the doctrines of the establishment, in this case your Hints to the Legislature would have had some colour of excuse. There would have been some ground to have gone upon. But with a conviction in your mind, (if that mind be open to any conviction of truth) that the doctrines I preach and write, are in perfect agreement with the articles of the church of England; to impeach me for proclaiming those doctrines; and to call upon the legislature to suppress what their laws countenance, and to punish what those laws approve, is a conduct as unprecedented as it

is bold; and forms an instance of temerity, never before, I believe, exhibited in this or any other kingdom.

Could you suppose, Sir, when the vanity of your mind prompted you to this business, that the mere *ipse dixit* of any writer, and that an anonymous writer too, would procure so much credit, as to admit of no appeal? Did you, indeed, flatter yourself, that immediate judgment and execution would follow, without the permission of setting up a defence, unheard, unexamined, and without inquiry?

Believe me, I have still so much confidence in the wisdom of our good old English constitution, and the faithful and impartial administration of justice, among all ranks and orders of the people, that I should feel no apprehension for the issue of trial, whenever my cause, as a preacher, or writer, or both, on the subject of evangelical truths, came to be heard. Notwithstanding you call yourself a Barrister, (and may be one for ought I know) I should entertain no fears on this account. I would follow you most cheerfully before that tribunal which you have so wantonly, and in my view, with so much indecorum addressed; and with confidence wait the verdict.

You should, if you please, concentrate in your own person all the different characters of prosecutor, counsel, and evidence; and becoming the *Tertullus* of the day, bring forth your charges with all the oratory of the Barrister.

On my part, I should adopt the same plan as Paul did at Cæserea. I should retain no special pleader: for the cause needs none, and I want none. But I should singly take the articles of the church of England in my hand, and with these only appear before the court.—And however some great divines among the living have discovered the articles of the church to be not Calvinistic; (See Hints, Part I. page 38. note) or some of equal note among the dead, have left behind

them their testimony to prove that a subscription to them hath nothing to do with the doctrines contained in them, being intended only as a fence to keep out of the church, the abettors of popery, anabaptists, and puritans.* Leaving these things to be determined elsewhere, between God and men's consciences, with which I have nothing to do; I take the articles of the church just as I find them, in their own plain sense and meaning, and such as every man of plain sense and meaning like myself, must ever take them, and presenting myself before the court, I should say—'These are the articles of the church of England, which at my ordination I subscribed; they had then my unfeigned assent and consent: and they have the same now. They were then put into my hands, as the standard of truth in the established church. By this standard it was expected the ministers of it should form and regulate their doctrine, in their teaching and ministry. And this, in common with every other clergyman in the establishment, I solemnly engaged to do.—By these articles I have been guided ever since, in all my preaching and publications: neither have I knowingly departed from them upon any occasion.—To them therefore, I appeal; by them I desire to be judged. In their decision I shall still rest satisfied; and with their sentence I will stand or fall.'

But why do I speak of these things, as if they were to be the subject of some future, and not of present examination? Are we not both virtually before that tribunal now? Have you not all along, in your Hints, been professedly addressing the legislature, as well as the public; and calling for judgment on what you are pleased to deem dangerous and pernicious doctrines in my writings? And have not I, (though ostensibly directing my letter to you, yet making you the medium only of communication) been giving in my defence be-

* Paley, &c.

fore the same bar, and appealing from the injustice and falseness of your charges to their just determination?

Whether or not the legislature hath regarded either; or whether the legislature will condescend to regard either; these are points, which, in deference to that high authority, become not me to decide. But it is a duty I owe myself, as well as the cause of truth in which I am engaged, to follow your publication with mine; and more especially to shew both the public and legislature, as far as the dispute shall come before them, the ground of right on which I rest, and by virtue of which I so preach, and so publish the great truths which mark both my preaching and my publications.—And, Sir, you must allow me in my turn to say, that if it can be shewn, (as it can and shall be shewn before I have done with it,) that I have not advanced a single point of doctrine, but what the articles of the church of England will bear me out in, and fully justify; what you have said in your Hints, ought not to be said with impunity. To compare, as you have done, the evangelical principles of our English establishment in the church, with the jacobinical principles of France, (Hints, Part 1. page 72, &c.) is as reproachful to the state, which enjoins those principles, as it is to the clergymen who propagate them in their preaching and writings; and calls for the just reprehension of the legislature, and the public.

A few of the more prominent parts of your pamphlet in proof, will serve to shew your presumption in this particular. And a reference to the articles of the church themselves, in reply, will no less serve to shew how ill-founded they are. And while this comparative statement will suffice to justify my conduct, it will no less reprove your's.——I shall state each branch of the dispute in a regular way, for the better apprehension of the subject; and arrange the whole under distinct heads, that the decision may be the more luminous and striking.

OF THE TRINITARIAN HYPOTHESIS.

I begin with this, as the first, not only because it forms the leading article in the doctrines of the church of England, but because it involves in its consequences all the other distinguishing points of faith.

If the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is to be branded with the name of a 'Trinitarian hypothesis,' I gladly take the reproach of believing in it. Every one knows, that knows any thing of my preaching or writings, that the most firm, cordial, and sincere belief in the glorious doctrine of the Holy Trinity, forms the most conspicuous and decided character in all that I have said or written. With me, indeed, it is the grand fundamental truth of the bible. It is the τὸ πᾶν, the whole of the book of God.

While you, therefore, in the wilful perversion of the scriptures, denominate this sublime truth the doctrine of *three Gods*, (which is wholly the fiction of your own brain, and in palpable contradiction to the plain language of the sacred word, which proclaims THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD,) I accept it in the very words in which that doctrine is graciously given; that "THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR RECORD IN HEAVEN, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST: AND THESE THREE ARE ONE." (1 John v. 7.) And while in the merriment of a light and profane mind, you call this sacred mystery a 'Trinitarian hypothesis,' I call it what the word of God calls it, "The pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy iii. 15.)

But the question with us now is, not what you or I call it, but what saith the church of England concerning this 'Trinitarian hopothesis?'—You will recollect, that you and I are now virtually before this court of appeal; and from thence, not from us, as far as concerns our present argument, must we receive the decision.—What countenance shall you or I have given

us, is the question, to our very opposite doctrines? Hear what the church saith in her first article, which runs in these words:—

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this GODHEAD, there be THREE PERSONS of one substance, power, and eternity, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST."*

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* However irrelative it may be considered by some to the more immediate subject in question, I would crave the indulgence of the candid reader, to the introduction of a short note, while the opportunity is so favourable, to express my astonishment that any man who is capable of reading his bible in the original Hebrew, should ever be tempted to the belief of the 'unitarian' doctrine. I will be bold to say, that not an individual among the 'unitarians,' or indeed among any other class of men, can give a satisfactory reason, upon any ground, but that of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, why it is throughout the bible, that we find the glorious name of Jehovah joined, as it is, with plural verbs, adjectives, and pronouns? If there be a man alive that can shew cause for this, but that one the scriptures in other parts have shewn, of the plurality of persons in Jehovah, it were devoutly to be wished he would.——I am not calling upon my opponent, the Barrister, to do it, for, poor man! from the specimen he hath already given of his acquaintance with the classics, in the instance of his *repentance-doctrine* for the *new birth*, he hath clearly manifested that he knows nothing of the matter. His faith concerning the 'Trinitarian hypothesis,' and that of regeneration, is much the same, both taken up upon trust.———But I am calling upon truly sacred minds, who are as truly serious in their desires after truth. To them I would propose the solemn consideration. Every one that is conversant with his Hebrew bible, cannot but know that in numberless parts the incommunicable name יהוה Jehovah, which is singular, is joined with אלהים Alchim, which is plural. In more than *thirty* places in the bible we find this. Upon the foundation, which innumerable portions of the word of God confirm, that in the One glorious essence of the Godhead, there are existing Three persons, and whose distinct names, are also revealed, this sublime truth appears in all its glory. But let any man, if he can, upon any other principles explain it? What a very striking proof we have in almost the opening of the bible, in ascribing the work of creation to the joint agency of the Holy Three in One. ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם Gen. i. 26. Here the word of God is in the plural number *Alchim* (not אלה Aloah singular) and the word corresponding to the nominative is also the first person plural נעשה "we will make." The "Alchim said, we will make man:" or let us make man.—So again in the following verse, the 27th, אלהים ויברא, and then the Alchim created. And yet if possible more striking, that memorable passage, Eccles. xii. 1. where the plural is made use of, as if to shew the agency of the persons existing in Jehovah in the act of creation.

The learned Mr. Parkhurst hath very justly observed, that it may be doubted

I hope, Sir, this will be enough to decide the point in respect to the first article of faith, according to the doctrines of the church of England. And I hope that in future you will have the candour to admit, when I contend in any part of my writings or preachings, for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, that I have the warrant and authority of the legislature on my side. And hence I hope also, that you will not, on this ground, any more call upon the legislature to put a stop to this part of evangelical preaching.

But perhaps you will deny having thrown out in your Hints any thing on this subject.—Stop, Sir, and let us clear as we go.—The first article of the church of England, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, once admitted, brings up after it all the other great doctrines of CHRIST'S GODHEAD, HIS ATONEMENT, and THE PERSON, WORK, AND OFFICE, OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST.—If you allow, (as after the palpable evidence I have brought I think you must allow,) the church in her first article is altogether 'Trinitarian,' will you be so good as to explain, whether you mean *the church of England will be filled with trinitarians,* if evangelical preaching be permitted to go on; or as you say 'will fall before it.' (Hints, Part II. page 198.) If her members are all 'trinitarians,' wherein will this article be violated? If they are not, what would you have them to be? Not 'unitarians' surely, with such an article in front of the church door! Oh, fie! Sir; would you have a *moral* unitarian subscribe to this article? Would you have him deliberately put down his name to a 'Trinitarian hypothesis?' and enter the church with a

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whether אלה the singular of אלהים be ever used in the Hebrew scripture (distinct from the Chaldee) as a name for Jehovah, "the true God. And yet in the face of these solemn things, we hear a man in the lightness of his mind, call the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead a 'Trinitarian hypothesis!' With what reverence hath such an one ever attended to that solemn scripture; "Thou mayest fear the glorious and fearful name Jehovah Alehim." Deut. xxviii. 58.

lie in his right hand? Admirable morality!—Precious evidences of practical godliness!—But I had forgotten. —The articles are only a fence to *keep out* the abettors of *popery, anabaptists, and puritans!*

OF THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

I bring this forward as the *second* of your several subjects of crimination in point of doctrine, which you have preferred against me to the legislature. And in the fancied excellency of your own most pure and upright heart, to be sure, I could not more highly have offended. To tell a man of this description, that in the views I have of scripture, the whole race are sunk, ruined, and undone; and to make this representation still more galling, by telling him that all are alike equally lost, equally undeserving, and equally exposed to the wrath of God! Sir, I am not at all surprized that such a dotrine should move the choler, and raise the indignation of one of your complexion!

But, Sir, spare your wrath, I beseech you, from *me*, and let the unitarian ebullitions a little subside! If the word of God teach me these doctrines, and if the law of the land *compel* me, while I retain the office of a minister in the establishment, to preach them, you must see the justice of making a transfer of your anger, upon this occasion.—A reference to the ninth article will be on my part, a sufficient exoneration! Every church prayer-book hath in it these words:—

OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN.

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his

own nature, inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit: and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain. Yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, φρονημα σαρκος, which some do expound, the wisdom, some the sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the laws of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

Now, Sir, I hope by this time you are a little recovered, and that you perceive, with the bible in one hand, and the articles of the church of England in the other, I cannot want authority to bear me out in my constantly proclaiming, that man is by nature and by practice, a lost, ruined, and undone creature. And that all men, and all descriptions of men (nay, my very friend the Barrister must be included,) are all alike brought under this universal condemnation; because "all have sinned, and come short of God's glory."

And surely, Sir, wherever you look for authority to silence such 'illogical priests' in the propagation of such doctrines, you will not, after this declaration of the church, in her ninth article, look to that quarter. You cannot conceive any thing so preposterous, as that the law should bid the ministers of the establishment, to tell men they are pure, when she herself, in this very article, solemnly declares, that "every person born into this world deserves God's wrath and damnation!"

If you will allow me to use your own words upon this occasion, I humbly conceive, with a little alteration, they form an admirable parody, in reply to your 'Hints.'—'What! are then the legislature, and the laws, so inadequate to the maintenance both of the civil and religious rights of the subject, that a *new* Bar-

rister, ignorant of the *old* articles of the church, must come forth to criminate her ministers? Are the three great powers of the state so incompetent to judge of their own articles of religion, that a single solitary Barrister must arise to explain them? And are men that have no faith, or what is yet worse, who deny the pure faith of the church, and call her most distinguishing doctrine a 'Trinitarian hypothesis,' to invest themselves with the power to judge of religious truths, and actually to enter into judgment, and condemn those who preach those truths, which the law sanctions and enjoins?' (Hints, Part II. page 194.)

OF THE TOTAL INABILITY OF HUMAN NATURE IN DIVINE THINGS.

Here is the *third* instance in which I have fallen under your heavy displeasure. It is as impossible for the trinitarian to cease giving offence to the unitarian, as for the laws of gravity to cease. But it must be so —the word of God takes up the subject, however humiliating to the pride of nature, and proclaims the unalterable, unaccommodating truth; "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. x. 23.)

You may, if you please, deny this, and with your wonted freedom declare, (as indeed you have done) that 'the doctrine is as dangerous in its consequences as it is absurd in its principle.' And you may add moreover, (as you have done) that 'to affirm our ability is not equal to our duty, is in effect to declare, that we have no duty: since no man can be under a legal or moral obligation' to do that, 'which he has' no power to do: 'the command would be as foolish as it would be tyrannical.' (Hints, Part I. page 19.) All this may seem very fair, and very plausible to the proud reasoning of man, among those who know not the scriptures, nor the

power of God. But this is what the scriptures call "charging God foolishly." (Job ii. 18.)

You have laid down a law for yourself, according to this maxim, which if you or the whole race of men, were to be judged by, would universally condemn all.

If, Sir, you really confess that 'your ability is equal to your duty:' and should it be found in the end, that 'that ability hath not kept pace with the duty;' if when weighed in your own balance, you should be found wanting, what an awful standard will you have made for yourself!

But these errors in your creed are perpetually occurring, from your wilful perversions of the word of God, and the presumptuous reasonings of your own mind. Hence you say, (page 8, Part I. Hints,) 'It must obviously be of prodigious benefit to the community, that all should be made to believe in this evangelical doctrine, that God made them originally sinful and depraved!' Whereas the truth is, it is neither an evangelical doctrine, nor the language of the bible. I believe I may safely challenge you to produce a single passage from any evangelical writer whatever, in which you can find it said, that 'God made men originally sinful and depraved.' And the word of God flatly contradicts your wilful misconstruction of the doctrine of man's fallen state, when in the person of Solomon, the wise king, it is observed, "Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccles. vii. 29.)

Do you really believe, that man because by his apostacy hath lost his power and ability to obey, God hath lost his right to command? Would you carry this kind of reasoning into common life? Put the case, that you were called upon, as a Barrister, to recover a debt due from one man to another, and you knew 'the debtor had not the ability to pay' the creditor; would you tell your client, that his debtor was 'under no legal

or moral obligation to pay what he had no power to do?' And would you tell him that the very expectation of his just right, 'was as foolish as it was tyrannical?'

Really, Sir, I should have thought your very profession as a Barrister, would have taught you better.—You must not be angry with me if I add, that I should really fear, had I to do with you in a like case, as your debtor, and I had nothing to pay, the *theory* of your doctrine, and the *practical* part of it, would very much militate. I verily believe that you would make me *feelingly* understand that I was under a legal obligation *to do*, what I had *no ability* in nature or art to perform. I fancy that I should soon be convinced, that though I had lost all power to pay, you had not lost your right to demand. And if my insolvency suffered me not to *give you* money, a prison would *give me* that punishment which the law prescribes for offences of that nature.

And, Sir, if, in relation to divine things, the total inability of man makes a way for the more glorious display of the liberality of God; what a melancholy perversion of the benignity of heaven must it be, that men cannot see, or will not see the Lord taking occasion from our totally helpless and lost state, to commend his grace and clemency? It was so with the debtors in the gospel, when *both* had nothing to pay, the Lord forgave them *both*.

But these are topics on which I expect not that we shall agree. We must have recourse again to that *old obsolete book*, the articles of the church of England, to see what agreement there is between them and this *new system of evangelical folly;* which you say, 'is growing up in the very heart of the country.' Do not you wish, Sir, that there was no such a book in the kingdom as this which contains the articles of the church? If you do not, you are singular; for I believe there is not another 'unitarian' in the land, but

what hates it most cordially.—However, let us once more look into it, to see whether we can find any thing that bears a correspondence to what I teach, 'of the total inability of human nature in divine things.'—See, here is an article as if written but yesterday, that tallies with all I preach or write on this subject, chapter and verse.

ARTICLE 10.—OF FREE WILL.

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn, and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that good will."

I am encouraged by the review of this article, as well as the former, to hope great things in the settling our controversy. I begin to think that you will conclude with me, that your Hints to the legislature were a little ill-judged. An appeal to such *old fashioned doctrines* as those articles insist upon, you did not I think foresee would stand pretty much in the way of your calling our evangelical preaching *new fashioned jargon*, and more especially, to prevent the preachers of it from being turned out of the church. Really, Sir, I cannot but hope *your predictions* will be realized. The church of England *will be filled with this order* of evangelists. There is nothing invidious in what you have said, properly considered; nothing severe. Your observations indeed, (a little unfortunately for your cause, but admirably for ours,) have been 'unfortified by argument, and unaccompanied with evidence.' But these are things of no novelty to a Barrister. I doubt not but you are in the habits of meeting with them *ex officio*

every day. It is only a small mistake you know, to have said *aye*, when you should have said *no:* that is all. And as you justly observe, 'the aspect of things demand that you should speak out.' And so you have indeed, and for that I thank you. Had you kept in the back ground of the subject your 'Trinitarian hypothesis,' your unitarian complexion would not have been so visible. It was a sad discovery on your part. But as you say, 'it is no time for complimenting or coquetting:' so I think. 'At such a crisis it would indeed be sadly out of season,' (See Hints, Part II. page 198.)———Therefore let us proceed:

OF THE SALVATION OF MANKIND NOT SUSPENDED ON THE MERIT OF THEIR OWN WORKS.

You cannot find terms it should seem sufficiently indignant to express your anger against me, for what I have advanced concerning the freeness, fulness, and all-sufficiency of the gospel of Christ, in pardoning sinners, not only without merit, but against demerit, and wholly by the blood and righteousness of the divine Author of salvation. And on my part, I never could find terms sufficiently expressive, to show the wonderful and extensive properties of that grace which God hath thereby manifested to poor, undeserving, and ill-deserving sinners, in the person and righteousness of his dear Son.

What a weight of your indignation should I have felt for this, had the sentence of this great crime, as it appears in your eyes, have been left to your decision.

And yet, might I whisper in your ear, I would say, should you and I, after all our undeservings, be at last found the happy partakers of such unspeakable mercy, few will have cause to bless the great Author and Giver of this salvation more, in the discovery we shall then

make, how suited it hath been in all these gracious properties, to 'our own state and circumstances.'

Sure I am, if it be not *free*, I have no claim to it. And if it be not *full*, it cannot come up to my present and everlasting need. And the greatness and *all-sufficiency* of it, are, in my apprehension, what particularly endear it, and makes it blessed to the necessities of all mankind. How blinded to all the possibilities of self-deception must that man be, who, priding himself in the observance of a few flimsy duties of morality, ill understood, and worse performed; to the breach of which perhaps, he had no temptation, and in the performance, motives that cannot always be brought into the account,—wilfully neglects and despises such great salvation!

But here again, as before, we differ.—And how shall our difference be adjusted, but by reference to the same authority as before? You recollect that we are before the legislature, and our cause is there pending.—On this particular point of 'justification before God,' it is somewhat remarkable, that the law hath thought proper to decide the subject not by one article only, but by two. Perhaps, to make the matter more plain, and her judgment more decisive, we find the sentiments of the church thus expressed in the eleventh article, 'on justification;' and the eighteenth, 'on obtaining eternal salvation only by the name of Christ.'

ARTICLE 11.—OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.

"We are accounted righteous before God *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and *not* for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith *only*, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification."

ARTICLE 18.—OF OBTAINING ETERNAL SALVATION ONLY BY THE NAME OF CHRIST.

"They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us *only* the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved."

Well, Sir, what do you think of it now? Was I authorized by the articles, or was I not, to tell a poor self-cofidemned, and broken-hearted sinner, 'who feared that he had sinned beyond the possibility of forgiveness,' that salvation was altogether free; that it was God's gift by Christ, and not man's merit, by his own righteousness; and that it was 'not suspended on the performance of moral duties!' Would you have wished me to have reversed the articles, and while they say, 'we are accounted righteous before God *only* for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' that I should have said—No; 'we are accounted righteous before God for our own good works and deservings! Would this have been faithful? Would it have been honest, in one who at his ordination subscribed to these articles, and promised to be guided by them in all his ministrations? But I correct myself.—'The articles were only thrown up to keep out of the church abettors of popery, anabaptists, and puritans!' Some little apology must be made, however, for my continual forgetfulness on these points: since when I read these articles, I find so much about these doctrines; and not a word about anabaptists and puritans!

I believe that I have very nearly, if not completely gone over the whole of the ground which you have marked with your feet before me, in the path you have trodden in this controversy. I have followed you, if I mistake not, pretty closely in your attack on those evangelical

truths contained in my writings. I have not indeed attended to the ludicrous parts of your pamphlets; your tale of a tub, the hogs in the orchard, and the dancing of a minuet; I know not what you may think, but I fear you lost sight of the reverence due to the solemn tribunal before whom you made your appeal, while you indulged your vain imagination with these ideas. Certainly they are more suited for a jest-book, than to form part in a pamphlet, entitled, 'Hints to the Public and Legislature.'

But my attention hath been directed, as I promised you it should, to the examination of those *bearings* you engaged to bring forward and to place under the public observation. I do not recollect the having omitted any thing of moment in them; but if I have, they shall be sure to have all suitable attention in my subsequent letters.

But from what I have already noticed, I venture to believe, that by this time you are ready to conclude with me, that the plan you have adopted in addressing the legislature, is not founded in sound policy. Depend upon it, Sir, it will not do. How indeed is it possible it should? How can the legislature gratify your extravagant wishes, in taking away what you call *a new religion*, whose *bearings* (to use your own words) are all of an age and standing with the *old?*

Better you had taken my advice, and not brought these *new* things to *bear* upon the *old* walls. I told you so. Did I not say I would counsel you for once, though a Barrister? and before you went further, I advised you to change your ground.* Did I not

* It is a curious circumstance, but not more curious than true, that in the attacks made at different times upon the church, some by false friends, and others by open enemies, yet, nevertheless they were always shifting their ground. Dr. Priestley, in his engineering plan, tried to sap the old walls of the church. 'We are,' says he, 'as it were laying *gunpowder*, grain by grain, under the old building of error and superstition, which a single spark may hereafter inflame so as to produce an instantaneous explosion.'—See his Importance of Free

caution you against coming near these old ramparts of the church; because they are bomb-proof against all the artillery of infidelity? But you was obstinate, Sir, and would not take advice. And now you have found what I said to be true.

I can very readily give you credit, and so will the public and legislature also, for what you have said, page 146, in the First Part of your Hints. It forms indeed so striking a picture of the man, that it should not be forgotten through all the controversy. It opens in so winning a way, so soft, so gentle, so moderate; that, as the scripture saith, "his words were smoother than butter, but there was war in his heart:" (Psalm lv. 21.) and as the address goes on, there breaks out, by little and little, somewhat of the real anger rankling within. This part of your pamphlet forms such a master-piece of the high-finished charity of the writer, that I must beg permission to transcribe it.

'In addressing myself (you say) as well to the legislature as to the public, I feel no intention, not the slightest, to excite a spirit of persecution towards those men, whose teachings I protest against. I revere too much the private liberty of individuals, and that spirit of toleration which pervades and presides over that constitution which is our glory and our boast. I revere these too much to wish that error of any kind should be opposed by any other resistance than argument, or any other weapon than reason.'

All this is very smooth and accommodating, and one might be led to expect that the writer of it would say, let there be a fair discussion of the points in dispute, that we may discover with whom truth is. But now observe the unpalatable things which follow:—'But holding, as I do, in the utmost veneration the rights of

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Inquiry, page 40. The plan is changed now it seems.—An enemy gets into the garrison, and raises an hue and cry against the defenders of the citadel. If these men are not silenced, the church must fall before them.

private freedom, and private judgment, I still do not think that the members of this *new* spiritual body should be favoured, as to a certain degree they are by spiritual immunities, and fostered by exclusive privileges.—I do not think that the open and perpetual propagation of doctrines so hostile to moral virtue, so subversive of that public prosperity of which moral virtue is the soul and cement, should not only obtain a licence with the greatest facility, but that such licence should bring with it an exemption from certain burthens attached to other classes of the community.'

Here the real motive of the address begins to come out! Harping still upon the string of a supposed *new* religion which I have already proved to be *older* than the fall:* and still contending for the supposed licentiousness of grace, which I have shewn is 'a doctrine after godliness;† the unitarian hatred to the cross of Christ is unfolding itself at every sentence.

Now comes the *finale* of this highly studied address, and all the *benevolent* purposes of the writer, from the first to the last appear. At the same time he 'reveres too much private liberty to wish that error of any kind should be opposed by any other resistance than argument, or any other weapon than reason.'

'This and much more, (he saith) ought neither to be *admitted nor endured*.—The evil is not slight, far from it.—But if it is to meet with encouragement instead of counteraction, the probable event may deserve to be considered, while yet the preventive can be applied; because when the event itself shall arrive, reflection may be nearer at hand than remedy.'

And thus what began so gentle, ends in recommending measures coercive: and the man who set out with professions that he revered private liberty too much to

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* See my first Letter to the Barrister, page 29 to 32.

† Ibid, page 11 to 14.

use any weapon but reason, now declares 'the evil is not to be admitted nor endured.' Poor man! And under these impressions he calls upon the legislature to run counter to her own laws, while he ventures to insult those laws by denominating her creed, a 'Trinitarian hypothesis;' her ministers, who believe in her doctrines as under the 'sottish dominion of Calvinistic methodists, and her system of faith 'as hostile to moral virtue!'

What respect the legislature will condescend to shew to such representations, as I have before observed, comes not within my province to inquire. With me such subjects are of high reverence. But as far as an individual is involved in the clamour gone forth upon this occasion against the truths of God, I feel but small concern. Even in the very moment of the murmur, it is but as the murmur of the wind without, while all is peace and safety within. The truths themselves I shall only clasp with warmer and increasing affection to my bosom, the more rude and violent the assault against them may be. They are too near my heart, and too strongly rivetted there for any power on earth to loosen or destroy.

But as it regards the cause of the church of Christ, and the welfare of a nation endeared to me by all the tender charities of life, I feel too close the sweet affinities of nature, not to feel highly interested for the many that are in it, as it belongs to the first and most momentous of all concerns, their spiritual and eternal welfare. And as such, I cannot but hope that the same gracious God who hath watched over the established church of this country, amidst all the unworthiness of us who are the ministers of it; and hath preserved her articles, for near two hundred and fifty years, from every attack hitherto made upon them, will preserve them still. And I confess that I feel a growing confidence that the Lord will; and from this hope, that

while the Lord hath guarded and doth guard, and while he doth mercifully preserve to the church those bulwarks of her faith, he will also cause yet more and more, by his grace, the great truths contained in them to be published and preached to the people. And if He that gives the means shall finally crown with success the end, God will bless us as a people, and make our British Zion yet a praise in the earth.

But if the creed of the unitarian is permitted to creep into our churches, and, under the specious pretence of rational christianity and moral virtue, the glorious truth of salvation by the merits of Jesus be thrown out and despised, it requires no great degree of prescience to foretell, that ruin must follow!

For my own part I do not hesitate to say, that in my view the religion of the prophet of *Mecca*, and that of the unitarian, are pretty much the same. And I would as soon embrace the one as the other. Nay, as Dr. Horsley hath observed, 'The true mussulman believes as much, or rather more of Christ than the unitarian requires to be believed.'*—And why should he not? The impostor himself, it is well known, not only allowed, but maintained his belief in the mission and writings of Moses. He allowed the mission also of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nay, he attempted to found his own pretensions on the failure of the preceding revelations, both of Moses and Christ.†

Do not be offended, Sir:—I am only speaking of unitarianism and Mahometanism *in the general.* Far be it from me, to make a personal application to the subject to you, or to any man. That there is a great family likeness between them, I can not only assert but can prove. And by and by, when I come to give the lectures I propose on the skeleton of unitarianism, I

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* Horsley's Tracts, page 265, 8vo. Edit.

† See White's Brampton Lectures, p. 78.—Koran, p. 174.

shall have occasion to shew it.—And I hope, as I have attended you pretty closely in 'the bearings,' you have brought forward concerning evangelical doctrines, you will not refuse to look at my 'bearings also,' in those I shall have to bring under the public observation, of unitarians.

But in the mean time do not say to me, as Dr. Priestley did to Dr. Horsley, when he was making similar observations, to trace out the close connexion of the two religions. 'You might (said Dr. Priestley) almost as well say, that all the unitarians in England are already so far Mahometans as to be actually circumcised.'—'It reminds me, (said Dr. Horsley in reply) of a circumstance which history records of an elder brother among the unitarians, in the latter end of the sixteenth century, Adam Neufer, pastor of the church of Heidelberg, the first, or among the first propagators of the socinian heresy, in the Palatinate. He began in socinianism, and finished his career with turning Mahometan, and was circumcised at Constantinople.'* And there is nothing to my apprehension extraordinary in it.—For as the one distinguishing character in both religions is one and the same, namely, the *denial of Christ's Godhead;* and both being very tenacious as merit-mongers, surely the unitarian might be supposed to endeavour to recommend himself and his religion to the mussulman, by submitting to the right of circumcision, not only as a deed of merit, but as a proof also of a winning and affectionate disposition.——I hope, Sir, you will not from hence infer, as Dr. Priestley did by Dr. Horsley, that I mean any thing of this kind concerning *you.* No, Sir, I mean nothing personal.

But that the unitarian faith is very accommodating we have strong proof in history. The unitarians of our own nation, in the reign of Charles the Second, made

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* See Bishop Horsley's Tracts.

an attempt to open a very cordial and brotherly connexion between themselves and the Mahometans, to unite both religions, and to have a perfect amity subsisting between them.——As this fact is, perhaps, not very generally known, allow me, Sir, to relate to you the particulars of it, with the unquestionable evidence by which its authenticity is confirmed.

A negociation was opened on the part of our English unitarians, with his excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, ambassador of the emperor of Morocco at the English court, in order to form an alliance with the Mahometan prince, for the more effectual propagation of the unitarian principles.

The two unitarian divines, who undertook this singular treaty, address the ambassador, and the mussulmen of his suite, as 'votaries and fellow worshippers of the sole Supreme Deity.' They 'return thanks to God,' that he hath preserved the emperor of Morocco, and his subjects, 'in the excellent knowledge of one only Sovereign God,' who hath no distinction, nor plurality of persons; and in many other wholesome doctrines.

They say, that they with their pens 'defend the faith of one Supreme God;' and that God raised up 'Mahomet to do the same with the sword, as a scourge on idolizing christians!' They therefore stile themselves 'the fellow champions with the Mahometans for these truths.' They offer their assistance to purge the koran of certain corruptions and interpolations, which after the death of Mahomet had crept into his papers, of which the koran was composed. For 'of Mahomet they think too highly,' to suppose that he could be guilty of the many repugnances, which are to be found in the writings that go under his name. This work they declare themselves willing to undertake, 'for the vindication of Mahomet's glory.' They intimate that the corrections which they would propose, would render the koran more consistent; not with itself only, but

with the gospel of Christ, of which they say Mahomet pretended to be but a preacher. They tell the ambassador, that the unitarian christians form a great and considerable people. To give weight to the assertion, they enumerate the heresiarchs of all ages 'who have opposed the trinity,' from Paulus Samosatensis, down to Faustus Socinus, and the leaders of the Polonian fraternity. They 'celebrate the modern tribes of arianising christians,' as assertors of the proper unity of God; and they close the honourable list with 'the Mahometans themselves. All these, they say, 'maintain the faith of one God:' and 'why should we forget to add *you*, Mahometans, who also consent with us in the belief of one only Supreme Deity.'

Such is the substance of a letter which they presented to the ambassador, with some latin manuscripts respecting the differences between christianity and the Mahometan religion, and containing an ample detail of the unitarian tenets. They apply to the mussulman, as to 'a person of known discernment in spiritual and sublime matters:' and they intreat him to communicate the import of their manuscripts, to the consideration of the fittest persons among his countrymen.

This singular epistle may be seen entire in Dr. Leslie's 'Socinian Controversy discussed.'

Dr. Horsley, from whose controversial writings with Dr. Priestley, I have taken it, (Letter 16, page 267,) by way of stamping the authenticity of it, hath added a note, in which he saith, that in consequence of Dr. Priestley's questioning the veracity of it, he examined the archbishop's library at Lambeth, from whence the copy was originally taken, where he found it in a thin folio, under the mark 673, among the *Codices MSS. Tenisoniani;* and entered in the catalogue, under the article 'Socinians,' by the title of *Systema Theologiæ Socinianæ.*

On the preceding leaf are these remarks:—'These

are the original papers which a cable of socinians in London, offered to present to the ambassador of the king of Fez and Morocco, when he was taking leave of England, August 1682.—The said ambassador refused to receive them, after having understood that they concerned religion.—The agent of the socinians was Monsieur Virzé.—Sir Charles Cottrell, Knt. master of the ceremonies, then present, desired he might have them, which was granted; and he brought them and gave them to me, Thomas Tenison, then Vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields, Middlesex.'

Dr. Horsley adds, by way of further confirmation, 'I do most solemnly aver, that I have this day, (Jan. 15, 1789,) compared the letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, as published by Dr. Leslie, in his Socinian Controversy discussed, with the MS. in the archbishop's library, and find that the printed copy, with the exception of some trivial typographical errors, which in no way affect the sense, and are such as any reader will discover and correct himself, is exactly conformable to the MS., without the omission or addition of a single word.'

If I may be allowed to use your own words, after this review of the precious prospects of unitarianism, I would say, 'To attempt to extirpate such error by the arm of force, would be as iniquitous as it would be foolish. I trust those days are for ever gone by; and that we shall never strive to rectify the judgment of men, by the violation of their rights. (Hints, Part II. page 196.)—But I would add, I have too much confidence in the good sense of the nation, and still more in the well-secured laws of the land, in relation to our religious establishment, to fear that the pure faith of the gospel, will ever give way to the miserable creed of unitarianism.

And now, Sir, I will take my leave of you for the present, until you shall call me forth again, to look at any further 'bearings' you may be pleased to bring for-

ward on the subject of evangelical doctrines. In the answering of those I shall also begin my introductory lecture, with the syllabus that is to follow, on the skeleton of unitarianism. And as 'you have by no means done,' and for my part 'I have not yet begun,' we shall both find ample room to expatiate upon our different subjects. But, Sir, let me admonish you to use a little more expedition in these *important* services of your's. *Six months* elapsed between your first and second publication; and how long the former engaged your *leisure* I know not. But if you go on in this tardy manner, you, as well as myself, will have ended life before we shall arrive at the close of our controversy.

And do allow me, Sir, to give you another hint. Depend upon it, when you have exhausted every arrow in your quiver, the cause you attack will have received not a single wound. The *Godhead of Christ*, with all the blissful consequences our poor ruined nature finds in that eternal truth, must stand. And could you but be prevailed upon, "not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think soberly," as the apostle recommends, (Rom. xii. 3.) you might be led to conclude that every thing interesting and momentous in christianity is founded in the Godhead of its Divine Author. Even the *moral* precepts of the gospel, as I have elsewhere shewn,* lose much of their dignity, and their authority is debased, if the founder be not more than man. In this case the new testament hath nothing higher to recommend it, except in novelty, than the legation of Moses.

Let it be supposed for a moment that Christ be not God; that what is said in scripture of "God's having set forth his Son as a propitiation through faith in his blood," means nothing of the kind: and that when the

* Sermons on the Divinity of Christ.

Son of God himself declared that "he came to give his life a ransom for many," he intended nothing by it, 'but a figure of speech!'—In this view of the subject allow me seriously to ask, what would you gain?—If there be no redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, no justification by his righteousness, how are we to be redeemed, and by what righteousness shall we be justified?

Do you really think, when you think at all of the subject in a solemn retired hour, that the moral virtues of human nature (as in the lightness of our mind, our vanity prompts us to call them,) appear virtues before God? Do you really believe that they are estimated by the great Searcher of hearts, as our deceitful hearts appreciate them? Do you not confess (the best men that ever lived upon earth have confessed) that the purest deeds among men partake of large portions of impurity?—And for the sins and transgressions of our lives, hath that question ever struck your mind, that "if the Lord should be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who may abide it?"

Will you tell me in answer to these things, that repentance will come into our aid, and all will yet be well?—What is our repentance? A patched up, blemished, and imperfect repentance, made up of alternate sorrow and sin?—To-day feeling the compunction of guilt: to-morrow falling perhaps again into the same or similar transgressions. The next day renewing the serious impression: and soon after giving fresh proofs of human infirmity. And thus going on through life, in the succession of offences and conviction: sometimes humbling the soul under the mighty hand of God from a conscious unworthiness; but more frequently forgetting, that "there is a God which judgeth the earth."—Are these sacrifices to offer the Lord? Are these fragments of a chequered life sufficiently meritorious to save the soul? Can any man be presumptuous enough

to satisfy his mind that heaven 'must be the natural reward of such a train of conduct?'

Considering the miserable consequences to which the rejection of our Lord's divine nature necessarily leads, and the despondency it creates in the human mind, one should imagine that the advocates for this doctrine, however secretly convinced that they are *right*, must yet wish to be *wrong*. For surely it is the most comfortless doctrine ever proposed to mankind! And however men may soothe their minds with the supposed rectitude of doing all that is right, when the mind is perfectly at ease and in health, and the awful objects of eternity are considered as at a distance; yet when these awful objects draw nigh; and a man is just closing life, and hovering between this world and the next; then it is to be apprehended, mere abstract arguments will entirely lose their efficacy. Rational christianity, founded in opposition to what is revealed, will then give way; and most tremendous must be the introduction of such a soul into his presence, into whose Almighty hand all judgment is committed, that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and when it will be proved that "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent him."

Before the close of life arrives, I shall find cause to glorify God, in your instance, if it shall please Him, who hath graciously said, that "whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him;" to cause a change, similar to that which took place in the great apostle to the Gentiles' life, to take place in your's; and that it may be said of you, as it was of him; he "that persecuteth the church in times past," now acknowledgeth "the faith which he once would have destroyed."

I am, SIR, &c. &c.

LETTER III.

Sir,

If the subject which first called forth my address to you, and which still continues to render it necessary, was not too serious for the admission of any thing that is light or trifling, I should have smiled at the change of manners which you have thought proper to observe towards *me*, in the *third* Part of your 'Hints to the Public and the Legislature.'

To talk as you have done in this pamphlet of approaching me with respect, after the contumely so profusely heaped upon me in your former writings, is as singular as it is unexpected. (Pages 94, 95, Third Part of Hints.) And although you have taken care at the same time to intimate, (lest perhaps such generosity should be misconstrued,) that it is my profession, and not my abilities, which hath this claim upon you; yet, Sir, be the motive what it may, I am thankful for the effects of it. Any thing and every thing, manifested towards me in a way of courtesy after abuse, is consolatory. The very relentings of an adversary are soothing.

You have rightly appreciated my abilities. They are indeed small, and as you observe, command no respect. But then you should have done me the justice also, to have acknowledged that they asked for none; their only recommendation (if it can be called a recommendation) is, that they have never been exercised to depreciate the honest worth, or the well-meant endeavours, of any man. Neither have they been directed to the perversion of truth; or to the wilful misconstruction of the words or actions of others. As far as I know any thing of my own heart, I would be

among the first to value merit wherever found: and with the last to lessen another's reputation. And whether you will give me credit for it or not, I profess myself upon every occasion a ready volunteer, to herald even an adversary's praise, where that praise can justly be given. Yes, Sir! amidst all the weakness of reasoning which you have shewn in this controversy upon *divine* subjects, I am prompt, and most cheerfully too, to acknowledge the strength of intellect which you possess in *human* learning. I cannot but lament indeed, the sad misapplication of talent which you have discovered in your endeavours to bring down the mysteries of our holy faith, under the presumptuous reasonings of your own mind. And forgive me, when I add, in your instance is afforded a renewed example of that blindness the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, so pointedly referred to, when "the mysteries of his kingdom are hidden from the wise and prudent, while revealed unto babes." (Matt. xi. 25.)

At the time that I am thanking you for this little token of forbearance and moderation which you have manifested towards *me* in your *third* pamphlet; I confess that I feel somewhat like a confidence arising out of it, gently to expostulate with you on several glaring improprieties, (to speak no more severely of them), which have marked your whole conduct in this controversy. And before that I enter upon the more immediate subject which I propose to myself for the leading points of my present letter, I shall take the freedom of bringing them before you.

Wherefore, Sir, allow me to ask, do you indulge that unreasonable anger which appears more or less through every part of your writings? If the reproachful epithets you make use of, (and in numberless instances where there should seem to have been no one provocation whatever to excite displeasure), were to be gathered into one mass, I fear that they would be found more

than sufficient to fill many pages. Surely, in a subject so truly solemn as the one to which you have invited the public attention, nothing like acrimony should have been suffered to mingle. Abuse, you must know, can give no weight to any cause. It may, and most probably it will, have a contrary tendency: and like the gangrene of a wound, eat up and make offensive every thing within the region of its pestilence. Your warmest admirers if they are possessed of any seriousness, cannot but have felt hurt at the many wrathful paragraphs contained in each part of your 'Hints.'

From the first view I had of your appeal to the public and the legislature, I was led to hope, that however mistaken your principles, your motives were good. And under this persuasion, it was but fair to conclude, that in the investigation of truth, with whomsoever of the parties it should ultimately be found, (with both it cannot), nothing personal would take place. But, Sir, if the Barrister himself at a distant day, when time shall have worn out the angry impressions of the moment, could be supposed to read what he hath sent forth to the public and legislature as the hints of another, and not his own; he would be astonished to discover how much there is contained in them of that wisdom which is *not* from above, and how little of that which *is*. Indeed it may be asked, to what page shall a reader direct his search, to find the smallest traces of that spirit whose distinguishing characters are, that it is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James iii. 17.

And if I might be permitted to advance yet a step further in a way of remonstrance, I would say, Why is it, Sir, to this unprovoked irrascibility of mind manifested through every part of the controversy, you have added the most sovereign contempt of all the answers written by way of defence against your charges?

Did you really possess that superiority of knowledge in the divine science you would wish to have supposed, surely it would have been accompanied with a modest, graceful, condescension to the humbler attainments of others. Men who have ascended the greatest summits in the study of the scriptures, have been the readiest to confess, that after all their discoveries in divine truths, 'they know nothing yet as they ought to know.' And from a well-grounded conviction, that in the present twilight of existence, he that seeth furthest into that vast subject of redemption, which an apostle calls "the great mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16.; seeth only "as through a glass darkly;" such a one will be the first to feel compassion for those that occupy a darker region. But, Sir, your deportment is the reverse of all this. A disdainful contempt for the persons, and a total disregard to the defence of your opponents, form the prominent features of your conduct. You professedly make an appeal to the public and to the legislature, as if the merits of your cause rested upon their verdict. Whereas the whole of your pamphlets manifest that you have already decided the question, and the sentence remains not now to be given. Your own opinion is, with you, final. Your dogma is the only standard. Every thing you deliver, is, as it were, *ex cathedrâ*, against which there is no appeal; and like the memorable decision of the Roman governor, the only reply is, "What I have written I have written."

It might have been presumed, after the disclosure which you yourself made, of your incompetency to judge in divine things, (however splendid your attainments in human science), that you never more would have ventured to decide upon any subject in theology.

You will be pleased to recollect, (or if it should not be convenient to call it to your remembrance, the public, it is hoped, will not fail to recollect for you), that in the *first* part of your 'Hints,' (pages 83 and 84), you mani-

fested so little acquaintance with the *English translation* of the bible, as actually to quote a passage of scripture, for the words of Mr. Toplady, because you happened to find it among the writings of that man: and without the smallest hesitation you pronounced him to be an infidel for the sentiment, which was the sentiment of an inspired apostle. This error of your's I pointed out in my first Letter to you, (page 45.)

And in the *second* part of your Hints, (page 29), you have shewn yourself so totally ignorant of the word of God in its *original language*, that you there say, the true 'meaning of being born again, (γεννηθη ανωθεν) implies nothing more or less in plain terms, than TO REPENT! This also I set forth at large, in a note, (pages 21—24,) in my second letter.

Do, Sir, let me prevail upon you to pause over this statement of what you yourself know to be plain matters of fact, and then candidly say, whether it is becoming in such an one, to treat the sentiments of others with contempt? Would it indeed be believed, that a man so little versed in the word of God, even in his own mother tongue; and so wholly unacquainted with it as it is in the original, should set himself up for a judge, and venture to speak decidedly on either? Is it for *you*, Sir, to preside at the discussion of any question in theology?

And might I venture to go on in expostulating with you, (and, Sir, I pray you to remember, that it is your change of manners particularly towards *me* in the *third* part of your Hints, which hath provoked to this freedom), I would say, wherefore is it, that on a subject so truly serious as the one you have called upon the public and the legislature to attend, you indulge in such a vein of levity and humour? Hath it never struck you, that in the eventual consequences which must ultimately determine our controversy, the everlasting happiness or the everlasting misery of one or both the parties is

involved? The decision of the public and the legislature upon this point is of small moment, compared to the final and unalterable determination which must one day take place between us, with whom shall be found "the truth as it is in Jesus." And while a judgment so truly awful is pending, is it suitable, or is it decent, nay can a man's mind be really impressed as it ought with becoming solemnity to the discussion of sacred things, to be for ever using jocularity and mirth?

I shall be glad to be set right if I am mistaken in my view of your three pamphlets: but really as they appear to me, the whole tendency of them seems to be directed, either to keep your readers in a roar of laughter, or to gratify the feelings of those who take pleasure in sarcasm.

Pardon me if I add, you possess abilities of a very peculiar cast. You have the art of making serious subjects ludicrous, and of giving such a turn to them, as I venture to believe none but men of a like mind with yourself would have conceived. The selections which you have made from the 'Pilgrim's Progress, 'Village Dialogues,' &c. &c. are proofs in point. I have often read Bunyan's Pilgrim, and I believe had I read it as often again, never would it have called up in my mind such a train of imagery, as in the fruitfulness of your imagination you have gathered from it. Indeed, Sir, excepting the 'Age of Reason,' I never met with any publication like your 'Hints,' where ingenuity hath been so much displayed in converting every thing into ridicule. But, Sir, do you expect to proselyte the public to your opinion, in making a jest of things which are serious? Is it decorous to go before the legislature with all the solemnity of a charge, and yet in the very moment you call for the vengeance of government to fall upon those you wish to criminate, to hold them forth no less as subjects of laughter? I know not in what light these things may appear to

your several readers, but I venture to think it would require no small degree of faith with truly serious minds to believe, that such a frivolity of conduct as you have shewn upon this occasion can consist, with a single eye to the glory of God!

The perversion which you have made of my writings, and of which I complained without obtaining the smallest redress in both my former letters, becomes another subject of just remonstrance. Though I should have ceased to complain, had you not, in what you have advanced in this your *third* pamphlet concerning it, added an untruth to cruelty.

I never expected (how could I indeed) that an *unitarian* denying the Godhead of Christ, and despising the doctrine of *atonement by his blood*, could ever relish such a tract as my 'Prop against Despair,' where the glories of both are the chief truths insisted upon. But I did expect indeed, (and surely I had a right so to do,) that a man professing his only hope of happiness hereafter, to be founded upon the justice which he exerciseth now, would at least use fairness.

Very reluctant should I be to make application of this trait of character which you have manifested towards me, to the general tenor of conduct in common life, which you shew towards others. But under the presumption that you are a man of integrity, (and far be it from me to suppose otherwise,) I cannot reconcile it upon any principles whatever, how a man of integrity can wilfully commit an act of injustice. I confess that I am not versed in that art of reasoning which winks at the commission of positive evil that a supposed good may come; and provided the object which he hath in view according to his ratio of thinking be right, it is not so very material the means which are made use of to accomplish it. This is a logic which I have never studied.

You say (page 95) 'if in the comments which Dr.

Hawker's publications have drawn from me I have been guilty of any thing like unfairness, I owe him an apology which I would not wilfully withhold.'—And you add, 'The Doctor in the present instance prefers his charge with great confidence, but he comes into court without his witnesses.'

Is this true, Sir? Have I preferred a charge unsubstantiated with facts, and unsupported by witnesses?—You know it to be false. And that part of the public in whose possession my former letters are, know it to be false also.

In my first answer to the first part of your 'Hints,' I brought forward both my charge and witnesses. The very title-page, preface, and exordium of the work itself, which you so mutilated in order to make it speak the reverse of its own plain language, became the best witnesses, and a complete refutation of all you had advanced.—Indeed, to every one of discernment, the very method which you adopted in your review of my publication, carrried with it no small presumptive evidence of the fairness of your design. Else, in making quotations, why not give the whole of the paragraph: and why not give the whole in an author's own words? Wherefore detach sentences—separate from the context—make an emphasis where there was none; and endeavour to carry off the reader's attention from the main object in view, to another which the author never intended? The very method, in the first blush of the business, implies trick and chicanery. And who, but the man whose mind stands resolutely shut against all conviction of the truth, would pervert words to so base a purpose as to say, that because I point to Jesus, in the fulness of his grace and mercy, as "saving to the uttermost all that come to God by him;" this is to grant a further licence to sin? Who, when 'a poor broken-hearted sinner, fearing he had sinned beyond the possibility of forgiveness,' came to ask with his

whole soul convulsed, like the jailor at Philippi; "What must I do to be saved?"—who would insult those agonies of the mind in bidding him go again, and perpetrate the same sins which he had before committed, because "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin?" Is there a line, in the whole of that little book of mine, that can afford authority to favour such a conclusion? Doth not indeed every page of it, in a fair and candid reading, tend to disavow so ungenerous a comment? But though these evidences have been again and again stated, yet you say that 'the Doctor comes into court without his witnesses.'

I have one witness more to subpœna, by way of a final decision to the cause; but which I shall reserve to a more just and impartial hearing: and which if I mistake not will make the decision final, and satisfactory indeed. The witness I mean, is the Barrister himself; —the court I call upon him to appear at, is the court of his own conscience;—and the time of giving in his testimony, shall be the hour of his death. Truth then will speak out, and the prejudice of the unitarian will be done away. And if in that solemn hour your whole heart and mind can, and will say, that you have done by me upon this occasion as you desire to be dealt with, it is all well, very well. The question then will be for decision at an higher tribunal than the legislature, to whom you have now referred the matter, with whom the truth is; and there I cheerfully rest it.*

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* It is always with regret when I complain. But indeed, Sir, you give occasion for it so frequently by the unfairness of your arguments, and the perversion of what I advance in reply to your observations, that it is impossible to pass over all the provocations of the kind, with which the whole of your pamphlets abound. Whether the very habits of your profession lead to it, and you fall into this manner insensibly, I know not; but so it is, that your disposition to quibble is always uppermost with you, and you are perpetually on the catch.

A striking proof in point you have given (pages 99, 100, in your third Part,) in the statement you make of what I said (pages 72, 73, Letter II.) on the insolvency of man not lessening the rights of God. I simply contended for a plain matter of fact which common sense cannot deny, that let the inability of

I have not yet done with remonstrating. Indeed were I to follow up every cause for an employment of this nature which your pamphlets furnish, I never should have done, nor cease to expostulate until that I ceased to answer you.

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a debtor be what it may, the claim of the creditor, until satisfied, must remain. In your remarks upon this, you put the case of a fire destroying a borrowed property, and hence you say that as there is a moral impossibilty that that *identical* property can never be restored, the claim of the creditor is lost. But this is a quibble. For though that *very property* cannot be given back, yet the claim for an *equivalent property* still holds good. And in the case of a total inability to make it good the exercise of the penal laws becomes a just expedient. And this every poor confined debtor this day, in every prison of the kingdom feels to his cost. And do suffer me to add, that notwithstanding the profession you make, that as a counsellor you would not advise your client to seek redress from an insolvent debtor, I believe the principles and practice of your fraternity will not be found to correspond much with such lenity. Indeed, though in many cases it might be right, yet in many more it would be found wrong. Dishonest men would take advantages of it, and contract debts with impunity, if there were no redress for the honest part of the community to punish craft, when their insolvency left no other satisfaction.

But, Sir, after taking your sense of this case in your own way, as it stands in the relation between man and man; your reasoning holds no longer good, considered in reference to our insolvency with God. Our Almighty Creditor loseth neither his debt, nor his power of enforcing full payment of that debt, by any intervening circumstances which may arise in our poverty. To adopt your own figure of illustration, though the 'stock be burnt in the warehouse; and the borrowed picture of Rubens be destroyed with it;' nay, had you added, though the debtor himself be also consumed in the flames; the obligation of payment is not taken away. Hence those solemn words of Christ: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forwarn you whom you shall fear. Fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you fear him." (Luke xii. 4, 5.) You see, Sir, that the penalty of man's insolvency towards God reacheth beyond the limits of the present state. And you should have remembered, that it was to this grand object of consideration I referred in the case I stated. Instead of quibbling therefore, it would be wiser to bring home the subject from the *supposed* insolvency of other men's circumstances, to the *real* situation of our own. And here the gracious advice of Jesus will suit us both. "Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Matt. v. 25, 26.) In consequence of our manifold breaches of God's law, the just God himself may be considered Ανδικος, *a law adversary*. His action therefore must lie good. And, Sir, whatever your *unitarian* ideas of moral goodness may be now, in that day when the cause is brought into the court, it will be found, that unless we have here agreed with him in the merciful terms of reconciliation with God in Christ, that prison of everlasting misery will be our doom; a release from which is impossible since the debt can neither then be cancelled nor paid.

But of all possible causes which your Hints give occasion for, in appealing from the injustice of your decision; what you have advanced in this *third* part in reference to the articles of the church of England, and my adherence to them, is the most extraordinary and unprecedented.

'Dr. Hawker, you say, (page 104) like the rest of the propagators of these doctrines, takes shelter behind the articles of the church of England.'—And where, in the name of common sense, should a minister of the church of England take shelter, but under the established authority of the church to which he belongs? What, Sir, because you have thought proper to applaud Dr. Paley for loosening the sanction of a solemn subscription to the articles, by declaring it to be *pro forma,* doth it follow, that all that subscribe should consider it in no other light? Will you not allow it possible, that with numbers a subscription to the doctrines of the articles is a matter truly conscientious? Supposing a clergyman to believe, (which I do most heartily,) that the articles of the church of England, in the doctrinal parts of them, are in perfect agreement with the scriptures; is it not to be expected from a person of this complexion, that in all his ministerial exercises, as well in preaching, writing, visiting the sick, and every parochial duty, he will faithfully and fully follow them? And according to your own ideas of morality, would you not esteem that conduct highly immoral for a man to subscribe to what he did not believe; and then come forward to tell the world that he considered himself under no tye from his subscription?—And under this view of the subject only, was there ever a greater outrage committed upon the good sense both of the public and the legislature, than you have done, in making that a charge against me for a weakness and poverty of argument, which, in the esteem of every moral man, must at least become the strongest recommendation of my faithfulness and integrity?

Do, Sir, let me beg of you to exercise a little more modesty upon this occasion. Do call to your remembrance the singular nature of the attack which you have made upon me.—Do add to that remembrance the recollection also, that in this attack you have not simply brought me forth before the public, but before the legislature, as having offended against the sanction of their authority, by my preachings and publications, and merited their severest reprehension. So that it is before the solemn court of the law of the land that you are sending forth your Hints: and from the legislature seeking a due attention to those Hints, to silence me in my ministry.

Call, I beseech you, to your remembrance these things; and then say, what method but the one which I have adopted, could any respondent standing in my situation have taken to refute your calumny? By appealing to the articles, I literally appeal to the law. You would insinuate that that law I have broken, and under that cover you call upon the legislature to interpose their authority. In answer, I refer to the law for decision, and thereby take a short and most effectual method to come to an issue on the point. In the accomplishment of which, I simply state through my letter to you, before that legislature, (which, according to all my views of decorum, you have very wantonly and indecently addressed,) that every iota, both in my writings and preachings, are in full conformity to their articles; and by that standard I pray to be tried. Can any thing be more fair, more open, or candid? And who doth not perceive in this answer of mine, that I am not simply taking shelter, as you say, behind the articles of the church for *my* defence, but that I am bringing forward those articles for *your* confusion. If you read that part of my letter under the idea that what I then said, was said by way of *my* justification, I hope and trust, that you are the only person in the realm that

will so read it, or put such a construction upon it. No, Sir, it was the furthest from my thoughts, merely to say that the articles of the church of England would *bear me out;* but to shew that the authority of the legislature is called in question, and therefore *must be brought in.* It is the law of the land, strictly and properly speaking, that you insult, and not Dr. Hawker; and therefore it is the legislature itself, and not a clergyman of the establishment, acting under the authority of that legislature, that is called upon to punish such an impeachment of its wisdom.

There is not a school-boy who reads our controversy, but what hath discernment enough I hope to observe this. Every one indeed cannot but see that in all that I have said upon this occasion, I only make you the channel, the mere medium of conveying my sentiments to an higher authority than I am virtually addressing. Though I professedly write to you, yet *you* are among the last I am concerned to satisfy. The public plain enough discover, that you are considered by me but as a cypher in this business. And if the legislature should condescend to read such trash as either your Hints, or my reply, (which would be, I confess, to me a matter of no small astonishment,) they would instantly conclude (what I hope you clearly understand,) that I consider myself as requiring no shelter for preaching the doctrines, which by law they have prescribed, and which from conscience I believe. The reproachful language therefore which you have thrown upon *me,* for those doctrines, doth in fact belong to *them.* Your censures light upon the very legislature before whom you have sent in what you call Hints. And if the articles of the church of England taken from the word of God, after forming a standard of the religious establishment of this realm, for near *three centuries,* require an apology; it is the legislature, and not Dr. Hawker, that is called upon in your pamphlets to make it.

Had you made your attack upon me in consequence of my very warm, and decided attachment to the doctrine of faith in Jesus, by the redemption in his blood and righteousness; and had you come forward to the contest upon the broad basis of scripture; though you kept in the back ground as much as possible, in hiding from the public your 'unitarian' faith, and fighting in the disguise of a nameless polemic; yet these points would not have availed with me; upon this ground would I have contended with you for ever, and never sought an auxiliary in the articles of the church of England. The word of God alone would have furnished me with a complete armoury; and in the sword of the Spirit should I have found an ample weapon in defending "the faith once delivered to the saints."

But when in the vanity of your mind you ventured to impeach me before the legislature, and called upon the legislature to run counter to its own authority, by silencing what they are bound to encourage; it is then high time to stop the daring attempt, by the simple statement of the law. I beg you, therefore, once for all to remember, that I seek no shelter, as you say, behind those articles, but that you are driven from all shelter, in appealing any more to the legislature in support of your unitarian scheme, to the destruction of evangelical principles in the church of England. By this decision of the law I leave you, and every man of a like complexion to yourself, to the confusion of your mind upon this occasion: no form of words do I desire more plain or palpable, to justify my preaching and my writings on the great doctrine of faith, than what the articles express. All the barristers that ever pleaded in a court of law, will find them too plain and too palpable for sophistry to exercise her talents upon. And therefore do, pray Sir, look to it, I beseech you, for the conclusion is undeniable: while those laws exist, evan-

gelical preaching must exist with them: both are linked in the same chain: and both (as far as relates to the constitution of this kingdom) must stand or fall together.

But, Sir, if I feel myself constrained to expostulate with you for your illiberality towards me, in consequence of my appeal to the articles of the church, I cannot but feel myself as powerfully constrained to remonstrate with you, for the freedom which you have taken with my reverend brethren of the establishment, concerning their sense of them.—For if as you say, (pages 108, 109, Part III. of Hints,) that 'by far the greater part of the enlightened clergy' are convinced that 'moral preaching,' and 'not faith,' forms 'the whole of christianity;' you bestow a greater censure upon 'that far greater part' you allude to, be who they may, than I hope, or believe, was ever committed before. There never was, according to my view of things, so highly finished a libel! never so complete a satire!—What, Sir, is the christian doctrine of redemption by Jesus to be reduced to a mere system of ethics? Is faith in Christ to form no part in the divine mercy of God's salvation by his Son? And shall an 'unitarian' come forward and tell the public and the legislature, that 'by far the greater part' of the enlightened clergy have so formed their creed? That, notwithstanding their subscription to the contrary, the *illuminate* of the order decidedly are of his opinion? Do you really mean to assert, that 'such is the conviction of the most enlightened of our clergy?' Sir, I venture to reprove you for the foul slander: and I cannot but hope, that 'this greater part' you presume to throw such a reproach upon, will reprove you also. It is possible that, according to your system of theology, you meant it complimentary. I pray the Lord to keep me from such compliments. Nothing can be more awful than for one man, who professeth himself to be a servant of the

Lord Jesus Christ, to receive honour from another, who denies the Godhead of his Master.

But it is time for me to cease with expostulations. Indeed I have a much more important object in view; and which, at the taking up of my pen to make reply to the third Part of your Hints, I fully purposed to have made the whole subject of my present letter. Your momentary courtesy led me into the ground which I have since been running over in gently remonstrating with you—but which I now leave.

Allow me to inquire what is become of those 'bearings' of evangelical doctrines which you promised the public and the legislature to bring forward to view? You engaged, Sir, to this service; and, as I thought, you did it with no small degree of importance. 'To this subject,' said you, (page 3, Part II.) 'I have already devoted a portion of that leisure left me by my professional avocations; and I shall devote more of that leisure to it hereafter; I have by no means done with it; it requires to be brought out fully, and to be placed in all its bearings under the public observation.'

And where is it, Sir?—and where are the 'bearings of it?' If it indeed required, as you say, to be brought out so fully, how is it that you have overlooked it altogether in this *third* Part of your Hints? An object of such concern to the public and the legislature surely should not have been so passed by.

But perhaps your professional avocations have been more clamorous than you expected; and the necessary attention of a Barrister at the inns of court, hath deprived the public and the legislature at this time of the gratification they otherwise would have enjoyed.

Be it so:—yet let me hope, Sir, that when a recess from business permits, you will not forget your engagement: and I hope it will not be long. For my own part, I cannot but much regret the present disappointment. And as you know I promised to watch over

you, while bringing forth those 'bearings' you speak of, that they might acquire no tinge of 'unitarianism' from passing through your hands; so I still consider myself as pledged, both to the public and legislature, that whenever your professional leisure shall favour us with them, I may look at them very closely.

But in the mean time, do, Sir, pause and take a view of the ground you have been running over. Commencing your pamphlets, or your Hints (call them by which name you please) with large quotations from 'Mr. Colquhoun's Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis,' you have followed this plan with equally large selections form the 'Village Dialogues,' and other subjects of different authors, so as to make a book for sale; and now 'John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress' falls under your satire.* And these furnish our subjects for Hints to the public and the legislature. The public ought to consider itself very highly indebted to you for your services; and the legislature, no doubt, must have derived vast information from Hints of such importance. And do you mean, Sir, to prosecute this bookselling business to yet further extent?

But, Sir, though your forgetfulness, or the multitude

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* Had I the privilege of being near to you, I should whisper in your ear that solemn passage of the Lord by the prophet, in order, if possible, to correct that levity of mind which pervades your whole writings, and to shew you the awful state in which those men stand in the sight of God, who can sport with the infirmities of good men, under which their souls groan. "They eat up the sin of my people." (Hosea iv. 8.) The Septuagint have rendered the passage Αμαρτιας λαου μου φαγονται. In some of our old bibles, the margins have retained a sense nearer to the original, and for αμαρτια they have accepted the word περιτωμα *excrementum. Quidquid in corpore superveacaneum est.* What a strong designation of character! That which forms the loathings of God's people, becomes the feast of the carnal! They eat it up; they delight in it; it is their meat and their drink. Aha! aha! say they (to their failings and infirmities) so would we have it!—John Bunyan, and other good men like him, have published what might better have been left unpublished, and indulged moments of weakness in lighter hours, but ill-suited to the general seriousness of their character. But this is among the sources of their sorrow, and for which they cannot but mourn in secret! Sad, however, must be the case of that man's mind, who can take delight in what gives them distress.

of your professional avocations, or your want of leisure or inclination, no matter which, have robbed both the public and the legislature of the high gratifications you had proposed to them, in bringing before them the *bearings* you promised of the body of evangelical preaching; I must not follow your example, and neglect what I promised, that they also should be made acquainted with the skeleton of unitarianism. Though you forget your promise, there is no reason that I should forget mine. The bearings of the unitarian system, though I cannot call it a *body* for dissection, like the evangelical, yet it affords a sufficient subject, though dry enough, to go upon. And as you have had every indulgence to say what you have thought proper in your way, I trust you will not think it unreasonable that I should now beg the same indulgence in mine.

Hitherto I have been only following you on the defensive: but I see no reason why I should not now take the opposite ground in the controversy, and wage war with you in your own territories. You have been telling the public and the legislature, through three long dry pamphlets, of the nature and effect of evangelical preaching: and I desire permission to tell them, in a very brief manner, what they will have to expect from the establishment of unitarian principles. And as you so earnestly desire that the peculiar faith of the christian in the salvation by Jesus should be given up, and a mere system of ethics supply its place; you will allow, I hope, (for it is but reasonable that you should allow it) that before it doth take place in the kingdom, and the establishment be thrown down, that the public should be perfectly made acquainted with the changes that are to take place, and the happy effects which are likely to result from them.—This then I shall assume for my province. This is the subject which I shall bring before them: and as you form so admirable a medium for conveyance, though it may not be exactly according to

the etiquette of letter-writing, I shall take the freedom to make you the channel.

I should very much have liked, indeed, had it been possible, to have given my lectures, and brought forth my bearings on the unitarian skeleton, *vivâ voce;* and had I lived within a reachable distance from London, I certainly would so have done, the Lord being my helper.

You are pleased to think and speak very contemptuously of extemporaneous preaching, and, as you say, (page 92, Part III.) ' to pour out, as those men do at random, whatever suggests itself, without considering whither it tends, how it is connected, or to what it may be applied, is no difficult task.' But I should not be deterred from delivering an extempore lecture on any feature in unitarianism, though all the fraternity of the city attended. And I see no reason why incoherency, or matter at random, should be more likely to form the extemporaneous discourses of a minister of Christ, than the effusions of barristers at the different courts of justice.

But as I am precluded this privilege, I must content myself with delivering the outlines of my 'Hints' on paper. A brief syllabus of the heads of unitarianism, sufficient to form suitable ideas of the nature and effects of it, will be all that is needful for me to go through. Indeed this was all that I engaged to do in my former letter: I said, that ' while you were engaged in your way, in dissecting the body of evangelical doctrine, I would set forth the prominent features on the visage of the unitarian.' And, as I shall have nothing but a bony subject to lecture upon, (lecturers in anatomy make light of such labours) I shall have fully accomplished this business, when I have taken in the whole of its component parts, and run over *the dry bones of the valley*, from the *sutura coronalis* down to the extremities, *manibus pedibusque.*

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

OF THE ORIGIN OF UNITARIANISM.

Agreeably to all the settled plans of lecturing, I would first do as all lecturers have uniformly done in every syllabus, be the subject what it may—first introduce the subject with the history of the order.

And I am the more earnest to adopt this plan upon the present occasion, from the antiquity of my subject. 'Many and various (saith our Barrister, in the opening of his Hints, Part I. page 2,) are the new systems to which the old have given place. We have a new system of agriculture—a new system of gardening—a new system of politics—and, to crown the catalogue, we have a new system of religion.' But while I do the Barrister the compliment of borrowing his language in the opening of my lectures, I cannot follow him in compliment respecting any novelty in his religion. Unitarianism is a very old heresy; there is nothing new in it.

I differ very widely from all my predecessors in my view of this one character of the unitarian. It hath been generally supposed, nay, I believe universally set down as a thing not questionable, that this sect had its origin several ages after the apostles. But I confess myself much disposed, however singular it may be, to differ from this opinion: I venture to think that the church of God 'hath been vexed with the wiles' of it, under one form or another, from the very first; nay before the church was formed into a church.—But while I say this, let me be perfectly understood.

There are several sects of the unitarian breed, whose family feature approximate so very near each other, that, in the first view of them, their respective clans are not so easily definable. And indeed at the first opening of their heresies there was but one grand and dis-

tinguishing principle which marked all; namely, the hostility of their sentiments to that plan of sovereign grace and mercy which Jehovah revealed in the old testament, to be accomplished under the new, of redemption by the blood and righteousness of the Son of God.—Against this, as the sublime and peculiar doctrine of the bible, the whole phalanx of the heresiarchs, arians, socinians, pelagians, and unitarians, set up their banner. While I say, therefore, that the church of God hath in all ages, and from the earliest periods, been 'vexed with their wiles,' under one form or other, I mean to include in this all the different branches of the family: for although when analyzed, they may very easily be classed, as they are found in certain points of doctrine not to harmonize, yet after all, as in the essentials of salvation, they agree in rejecting 'the Lord of life and glory,' they may all be considered only as so many different shades of one, and the same character.* And it is really curious to observe what a diversity of opinions the human mind is capable of being led away with, when once departing from the strait line of truth.

Thus the arians (so called from Arius, of Alexandria, who lived about the year 320) own Christ to be God, but yet in an inferiority of character. The socinians (who derive this appellation from Faustus Socinus, the leader of that sect, who lived sometime about the year 1600) deny the Godhead of Christ; though at the same time, by a strange confusion of ideas, many of

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* I beg once for all to remark, that by an unitarian I mean, in the modern acceptation of the word, one that denies the Godhead of Christ. It is this, and this only, which in the present day defines the character. I have more than once observed, in various parts of my writings, that a trinitarian is decidedly an unitarian in the firm belief of the Divine Unity, while considering that unity existing in a three-fold character of person. But as the general consent of the religious world have agreed to call those who deny Christ's Godhead unitarians, I seek not to be singular by adopting any other. It will therefore, I hope, be all along considered, that it is in this sense, and this sense only, I accept the appellation.

them allow him divine honours :* while the unitarians (and especially in modern times) differing from both, contend for 'the simple humanity of Christ.'

It is therefore difficult, when treating of such characters in a general way, to keep separate and detached the definable characters of each, where, like the colours of the prism, they run so much into one another. For sometimes the arian is found embracing the same sentiment as a socinian : and again the unitarian harmonizing with both, and all often mingling in the same congregation. It is enough with them that they all unite in one deadly heresy, the denial of the Godhead of Christ; as if this, and this alone, was to constitute their character.

If I had to deliver these lectures orally, instead of being confined to the mere sketching the outlines of them by letter, I should here indulge myself with a greater range of discourse. It would not be a very laborious task, in that case to run over the several grounds which this sect hath occupied. And perhaps it might be gratifying to some, to notice the different stands which the followers of it have taken, through the different ages of its commencement, and mark the versatility of its positions, and the changes it hath gone through during the several periods. But, circumscribed as I am to this mode of lecturing, I must be content to narrow as much as possible that path of inquiry, while tracing to its source.

Whoever feels interested to know any thing of the history of unitarianism, will find no difficulty in following it back from the present æra, to the beginning of the seventeenth century. This plan I confess, is retrogade, but the track will be the more plain to guide in researches after it.

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* Socinus himself was clearly of this opinion. Many, however, who affect to be called socinians, totally forbid all adoration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many content themselves with considering the origin of unitarianism as commencing with Faustus Socinus, who died about the year 1604, taking it for granted, as the socinians borrow their title from this man, that he was the founder of the sect: but this error would soon be corrected, if the history of the unitarian creed be carried back to the preceding age. Socinus indeed threw some shades of his own upon the portrait of unitarianism, but the picture itself hath been drawn to his hands before he himself was born.

About the year 1550, there was no small party of unitarians in Poland: perhaps at that period Poland might be considered the metropolis of the order. The famous Pelatine of Podolia, Siemienius, built the city of Rocow for them: and from hence issued what was called the Racovian Catechism. Much about the same time the most considerable of the socinian party assumed the appellation of *Polones fratres*, or Polonean brethren.

I stay not to particularize the different heresiarchs which followed each other, in the line of unitarianism, through several ages, while running back in pursuit of the origin of it. I pause only in the moment, while treading the present ground, to notice, in the *second* century, the famous tanner of Byzantium, Theodotus. This man indeed demands somewhat more than ordinary mention beyond his brethren, in that he more daringly than they contended for *the simple humanity of* CHRIST. But excepting him, we find no name of note in the history (at least none hath fallen in my way in any of the histories which I have seen among the unitarians), at a period so early.

And when we arrive at the age of the apostles, we do not meet with any *special names* remarkable for their attachment to unitarianism, though we discover clear marks of the existence of the heresy itself, and especially in the beloved apostle John's time, together

with the apostle's open condemnation of it.—One passage in proof will be as fully decisive as a thousand. "Many deceivers (saith the apostle) are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."* Can any thing be more in point?

I shall make a large stride now, by way of shortening the subject. It will be recollected, I hope, that I am in search of the origin of unitarianism, and not giving the history of it.

From the days of the apostles, in tracing back the annals of the church before the advent of Christ, no period, according to my apprehension of unitarianism, was wholly free from it. But while I say this, I beg to re-

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* 2 John vii. Dr. Priestley, in his history 'of the Corruptions of Christianity,' was very earnest to make a small, but important alteration in what the apostle here saith of "Christ's coming in the flesh." The Doctor would have rendered it—OF the flesh: but both the passage in this 2d Epistle, ιησουν χριστον ερχομενον εν σαρκι, and the parallel passage 1st Epistle, chap. iv. 2, εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα, cannot admit the preposition to give it such a term: and therefore, "coming IN the flesh," plainly and unequivocally, carries with it the incarnation of the Son of God. And, moreover, "coming IN the flesh" implies that it was at the pleasure of him that came so to come or not: for otherwise he might have come in the nature of the angels. But it is sweetly said of Jesus, that "he took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." The nature of angels would not have answered the purpose of his mission; and therefore he took it not: but his power and pleasure in coming in the nature of man, instead of that of angels, are both plainly implied in the expression. Neither is this all; for "coming IN the flesh" as fully testified his Godhead. It were unnecessary to notice his coming in the flesh, upon the idea of his being no more than man; for how should a mere man come, but in the flesh? Bishop Horsley, in his controversy with Dr. Priestley upon this subject, laughs at the Doctor upon the occasion. 'If some future historian, (says the Bishop) in these planet-struck times should say, that in the latter end of the eighteenth century came Dr. Priestley preaching the unitarian doctrine, no one would conceive any more than that a man of this name came preaching the doctrine. But if the historian should say, Dr. Priestley came *in the flesh* preaching this doctrine, a general curiosity would immediately be excited, to know whether Dr. Priestley had it in his power to come any other way! and when once it was found that he had not, the style of the writer would be condemned, and his credit perhaps lessened.'—Let any one make application of this kind of reasoning to the passage of the apostle, and then say whether the inspired writer did not, by the phrase, plainly imply the incarnation of the Son of God, and declare all them antichrists who denied the doctrine.

call to the attention what I remarked before, that this sect variously made its appearance under the different departments of it, *arianism*, *pelagianism*, and the multifarious *nothingisms*, which the ignorance, superstition, or prejudice of the human mind gave rise to.—But in the denial of the Godhead of Christ, and atonement by his blood and righteousness, which is the distinguishing principle in the whole creed, more or less, of all; the church of Christ never was wholly freed from the vexatious wiles of that sect.*

But whatever appearances this heresy put on in the several intermediate existences of it, from its origin to

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* If this proposition be doubted, I will thank any man that is able, to define what the nature of that unbelief was, which manifested itself in those *whose carcases fell in the wilderness*. (Compare Numb. xiv. 29, 30, with Heb. iii. 17—19.) The apostle declares, concerning these men, that *the gospel was preached unto them*." (Heb. iv. 2.) Now if the gospel was preached unto them, as it was unto Abraham, (Gal. iii. 8.) and the sum and substance of the gospel preached unto Abraham ran in those words of the charter of grace; "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (Gen. xxii. 18.) will it not undeniably follow, that the unbelief of these murmurers in the wilderness was an unbelief in Christ?—I shall leave the curious to draw the line of distinction, (if there be any) and say whether that unbelief was the denial of his Godhead, or a denial of his righteousness: the one is closely linked with the other, and hardly separable. But whether a contempt of *imputed righteousness*, under the idea of their own moral perfection and uprightness, or the denial of his Godhead, who was, in the after ages, to arise to *do away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, whether, one or both of those principles marked the character of those murmurers whose carcases fell in the wilderness, I stay not to inquire; but certain it is, that if either or both belonged to them, the church did not want for opposition at that period, any more than in the present hour, from sectaries denying the truth. I should call such unitarians, according to the modern acceptation of the word—What others may I know not.

Upon the same principle, I would desire further to inquire, what it was that formed the distinguishing feature in the rebellion of "Korah and his company?" (Num. xvi.) Did those men really covet the priesthood out of love to the order, and for the sake of distinction; or did they really despise it, in that it represented by type the doctrine of atonement, and therefore wanted to set it aside? Whoever reads with due attention the history, as recorded at large in the scripture, will find cause to pause over the question, before that they decide upon it. Korah declared the "congregation to be holy, every one of them: and the Lord (he said) was among them." Hence, therefore, according to this creed, their morality needed no other righteousness to justify them before God; and consequently, the ministry of sacrifices, and the office of the priesthood, as

the days of the apostles, I hesitate not to say, that, concerning the author and founder of the whole tribe, under all their various modifications, there can be no question. And when I shall have mentioned his name, and have brought forward *scriptural* authority in confirmation of that opinion, I venture to believe, that every candid person will be inclined to think with me, that all the after branches of the family, whether in the buddings of deism, arianism, or unitarianism, sprung from this root. The man to which I allude, is no other than Cain the son of Adam, and who stands forth on this account the first of the order, whether deist, arian, socinian, or unitarian, that ever made his appearance in the world.

And I only beg permission to make a fair statement of the case, that I may be allowed to bring forward the *scriptural relation* which is given of this man, and I do not despair of making the evidences of it perfectly conclusive and satisfactory.

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implications of sin, Korah and his company despised. On the other hand, Moses charged Korah with exciting rebellion with a view to gain the priesthood: "for which cause, (said Moses) both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord." A man might covet the profit or the honour of the priesthood in that age of the church, or any other, and yet think light of the doctrine. What were Korah's views I do not determine: but if this man considered the congregation *holy* every one of them, it is plain he had no regard to sacrifices as typifying the necessity of atonement; and if gain or honour was his object, he had no real religion to scruple taking the priest's office, though the employment he regarded not, provided it proved profitable. Let who will determine that can, which was the leading sin in Korah and his company: certainly his idea of the holiness of his party, and contempt of sacrifice, savoured very strongly of unitarianism.

And to go back to the antediluvian period, what was the righteousness which Noah preached, and by which he condemned the unbelieving world, but the righteousness of faith in Christ? We are told that it was *by faith* the patriarch did it; and that on this account "he prepared an ark (a well-known type of Christ) for the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. xi. 7.) Hence, therefore, without staying to define the precise character with unnecessary accuracy, Noah could be no *pilgrim*, for he sought by faith in the righteousness he became the heir of, deliverance from *original sin*. Neither could he be an unbeliever in the doctrine of Christ's Godhead, for he had "faith in his righteousness."—

It is said of Cain, "that he brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect." (Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5.)

We might for ever have been at a loss in discovering the reason of this vast difference which the Lord put between Abel and Cain, in the acceptance of the one offering and the rejection of the other; had not the Holy Ghost by his servant the apostle graciously explained it himself to the church. "By faith," saith the apostle, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Heb. xi. 4.) Hence the excellency of Abel's offering consisted not in the value of it, but in *the faith* with which it was offered. And what was this faith, but the same as all the patriarchs had, faith in the promised seed; and faith that had an eye to that promised seed, as doing away the effects of sin which the fall had induced. Abel by the sacrifice of a lamb typified his own fallen state, and that redemption from it could only be obtained by the sufferings and death of him who was to come. Whereas Cain brought only of the fruit of the ground, as one not considering himself to be a sinner; and who sought not for acceptance in any merit but his own.

And hence, "Abel by faith offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." For the *one* by the offering of a sacrifice, manifested that he considered himself a sinner: and by faith no less testified that he sought for acceptance in the way of atonement which God had provided. The *other* by his gift, intimated that he had no consciousness of sin, and was looking for favour only in his

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Among what class of sectaries shall we place the men of that generation to whom Noah preached, and whom Noah condemned, when he himself became 'heir of the righteousness which is by faith?"

offering. The *younger brother* plainly shewed his hopes of divine mercy were to be sought for by faith, and that "without shedding of blood there was no remission." The *elder brother* rested his claim on his own righteousness, in open rejection of the method which God had appointed. Abel had an eye to God by faith in a *Redeemer*, Cain regarded God only in the light of a *Creator*. And consequently to those two distinct characters we may, and indeed we must, trace up, as to the founder and origin of each persuasion, the whole that in successive generations have adopted their respective principles. And as it is said in scripture, that "Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ,"* (Gen. iv. 21.) so Cain is the father of all such as deny the Godhead of Christ, and redemption by his blood.

So much for the origin of unitarianism in all its *bearings*, and with all its family branches. A very ancient, if not a very honourable progenitor, gave rise to it; and sending forth as he hath in the different ages of the world his diversified offspring, whether as manifested in the "son of the bond-woman" mocking the children of the free; or in Esau's despising the seed of Israel, who were children by promise! I leave it with the fraternity of the whole household to make the most of the alliance!

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* There is somewhat very striking and well worth attention in that part noticed of Abel's offering, that it was "with the fat thereof." In the after ages we find great stress laid upon this portion of the sacrifice. The Lord claimed it as his own. It was to be burnt upon the altar, and it was said to be for "a sweet savour." See Levit. iii. passim. Exod. xxix. On the contrary, the *Minoha* or meat-offering, like that of Cain, had no reference to the remission of sin, neither was it ever appointed under the law for this purpose.—What knowledge Cain and Abel had of the difference of offerings, is not said. But as Cain was wrath with the rejection of his, and Abel's is said to have been accepted, it is more than probable that some divine manifestations must have been given to mark the distinction.

LECTURE II.

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF UNITARIANISM.

'Rational christianity,' as the leaders of this sect affect to denominate unitarianism, admits of nothing in the system but what the powers of the human mind can fully comprehend and define.

As mysteries, (saith our Barrister himself, Hints, Part III. page 109,) cannot be made manifest, they of course cannot be understood;—and that which cannot be understood, cannot be believed—and can consequently make no part of any system of *faith.* Since no one till he understands a doctrine can tell whether it be true or false—till then therefore he can have no faith in it; for no one can rationally affirm that he believes that doctrine to be true, that he doth not know to be so:—and he cannot know it to be true, if he doth not understand it. In the religion of a true christian therefore, there can be nothing unintelligible: and if the preachers of that religion do not make *mysteries* they will never find any.*

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* My present province is a very humble and limited one: in these lectures I am called upon simply to give a syllabus of the heads of unitarianism, but I am not engaged to enlarge upon them. The public is to form its own judgment in what is brought before it. But I cannot help remarking how men, and wise men too, will sometimes commit themselves. The Barrister in saying so much about the proper foundation for faith, hath said more than he intended. For if, as he observes, a man can believe no doctrine until he knows it; his belief then ceaseth to be belief, for faith is swallowed up in conviction. And if this kind of reasoning be carried on to the other points of religion, it will throw to the ground all, even the knowledge of God; "For who by searching can find out God?" Job. xi. 7.

And if preachers will never find *mysteries* in the word of God until they *make* them, where did Paul the apostle find them? He is perpetually speaking of the mysteries of the kingdom, and of the manifold wisdom of God in a mystery, which he tells us "was hid in God from ages and generations." Nay, he seems to labour for expressions to tell the church of it. "To me (saith Paul,) who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, that I should preach

No form of words could I have found among the writings of our modern unitarians, which so fully defines the principles of the profession, as the Barrister himself hath here furnished. From hence it appears, that this system expungeth from the bible every thing which the gospel proposeth as an article of faith, and which the powers of reason cannot fully explain; and consequently the whole mystery of redemption is at once done away.

As reason is the great *Cynosura* to guide in the unitarian path, though the votaries of it pay Christ the officious compliment to place him at the head of their system of ethics, as the great reformer of mankind; yet thus they render all the peculiar doctrines of his gospel nugatory, and bring the great Author of the christian revelation himself, down unto a level with the circumstances of those he came to redeem. Some of this order have gone so far in reducing Jesus to the

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among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. iii. 8, 9, 10.

And no doubt all this is true, and a world of mystery it contains, upon the presumption, that the Son of God did leave the bosom of the Father and tabernacle in a body of flesh, to accomplish the great purposes of salvation, as the apostle relates to the church of the Ephesians in this epistle.—Well might Paul call it "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and labour for words to convey his sense of it. But reduce the gospel to the unitarian creed,—let it be for a moment supposed, that Christ is simply, and no other, a mere man, that he was raised up like Moses or any other prophet, to proclaim repentance and morality: in such views Paul's mystery dwindles to nothing. Nay the apostle, though in other points none reasons so clearly, yet here he appears to have lost his senses, and not only to be studying to bewilder the understanding of his readers, but to be bewildered also himself. What possible use of reason could then be assigned for talking of "mysteries," and the "hidden wisdom," and the "manifold wisdom of God," which "for ages and generations was hid in God:" if the mere religion of nature and the whole doctrines of Moses, in a new edition of it to be revived in Christ, was all that was intended by it? Can any man really persuade himself to believe, that such vast expressions mean nothing more?—Oh! that men should take such pains as they do to rob God of his glory, Christ of his Godhead, and their own souls of happiness!

general standard of humanity, as to assert him 'peccable, and liable to error as other men.'*

But let us analize the principles of unitarianism, and mark its distinguishing properties.

The unitarian grounds the mission of Christ upon this bottom,—that when the jews had made the word of God of none effect by their tradition,—and the gentile world had lost all knowledge of God, and was sunk in the rubbish of vice and immorality; it pleased God to restore the true religion of nature, and send Jesus Christ of Nazareth to bring about the spiritual worship of the one true God, throughout the earth.

This they tell us was the only purpose for which Christ came; and the great object of his ministry was, simply to preach a pure system of *morality*, to inculcate and recommend the great doctrine of *repentance*, to assure the pardon and forgiveness of sins to the humble and the contrite, to hold forth encouragement to the practice of religion and virtue, and by his own example to exhibit a pattern of obedience to all his followers,—to open more fully the prospect of another life after this is ended, and to teach finally and completely, that the vicious and incorrigible should be punished, and the honest and virtuous part of mankind should be rewarded in the everlasting mansions of the blessed, 'according to their works.'

These form the great outlines and general principles in the religion of the unitarian.—And these, and these only, the unitarians insist, form the whole doctrine of Christ and his apostles.†

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* Dr. Price states this in his Sermons, page 129.

† Dr. Priestley's notions of Christ's death, throw such a light upon the whole unitarian system, that I beg by way of note to insert them in this place. See Corruptions of Christianity, Vol. I. page 211.

"Our Saviour, (saith he,) as an innocent man, could have no terrors of a guilty conscience, and therefore he could feel nothing but the dread of his approaching painful and ignominious death. But having a clearer idea of this as

And these doctrines they say were confirmed by the death of Jesus; that he died as a martyr to his cause,

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we perceive in the history, and consequently the agony of it, than other men generally have of approaching sufferings, the apprehension which he was under no doubt affected his mind more than we can well conceive. Those who consider Christ as something more than a mere man, cannot imagine how he should be so much affected in those circumstances: but there is no difficulty in the case with those who consider him as a being made *exactly like themselves*, and perhaps of a delicate tender habit.

"As to the state of others, it is natural to suppose, that his mind would be less at leisure to attend to them then than at any other time, his mind being necessarily occupied with the sense of his own sufferings; and accordingly we find, that all he says upon that occasion respects himself only, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." That the presence of God forsook him, whatever he meant by it, is not at all supported by fact; and when he was much oppressed with sorrow, an angel was sent on purpose to comfort and strengthen him.

"He went through the scene of his trial and crucifixion with wonderful composure, and without the least appearance of any thing like agony of mind. His saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," was probably nothing more than his reciting the first verse of the 22d Psalm, to which he might wish to direct the attention of those who were present, as it contained many things peculiarly applicable to his case. There is nothing in this scene, any more than in his agony in the garden, but what is easily explicable on the supposition of Christ being a man: and to suppose that he was then under any agony of mind, impressed upon him in any inexplicable manner by the immediate hand of God, in order to aggravate what he would naturally suffer, and thereby make his sufferings an adequate expiation for the sins of the world, is a mere arbitrary supposition not countenanced by any one circumstance in the narration." Thus for Dr. Priestley.

When the impostor Mahomet first related to his followers the circumstances of his *Misra*, we are told, that many of his disciples were so much ashamed of the marvellous story, that they left him. And had not Abu Beker either from being more credulous than the rest, or from being more attached to the person of Mahomet than others, contended for the truth of it; his congregation would have dwindled indeed! See Martin's Bibliotheca Tichrologica. And what but the grossest infatuation of the mind, after Dr. Priestley's publication of what he calls 'the History of the Corruptions of Christianity,' could have kept together such a system of unitarianism as these volumes furnish? What a relation hath he given of the feelings of Christ in the passage I have just quoted! The Evangelist speaking of the body which the Father gave Christ for the purpose of redemption, calls him, *το γενναμενον αγίον*, that "Holy Thing!" Luke i. 35.—And Dr. P. saith, perhaps he was 'of a delicate, tender habit.' Jesus, he saith, was so necessarily occupied with the sense of his own sufferings, that he had no leisure to attend to the state of others. Whereas the Evangelist relates, that he addressed the daughters of Jerusalem and bade them not weep for him, but for themselves. Luke xxiii. 28. Christ on the cross addressed the Father in the memorable words which the prophet had a thousand years before predicted of him, and said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Dr. P. saith, that this was probably no more than reciting the first verse of a psalm, and that he had not the least appearance of agony. And though the prophets with one

and thereby gave a noble testimony to the truth of all he had taught, and no more. Neither merit, nor virtue, nor efficacy could be at all derived from the death of Christ in respect of his church: and all that is said of his death, of being *a ransom, a propitiation*, and the like, are mere figurative expressions in conformity to the parabolical method of the east: "bearing our sins in his own body," meaning no more than that an effect upon the mind of men is wrought by the preaching of his gospel, thus bearing sin away by reforming their manners.

And as the death of Christ was simply as a martyr to his cause, so the resurrection of Christ was to manifest the certainty of the resurrection of just men. "He arose as the first fruits of them that slept." And though the apostle Paul tells the church, that "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead," and Christ had himself declared to the jews, long before his sufferings and death, that when "they had destroyed the temple of his body, he himself would raise it up in three days;"—and moreover, had positively said, that "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" and "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." Yet notwithstanding these and the like scriptures, the unitarian, anxious not to lose sight of the simple humanity of Christ, asserts

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voice had predicted, that the Messiah should give "his soul an offering for sin; that the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself: that the Lord had laid on him the iniquities of us all," and Christ himself declared, that "he came not to be administered unto, but to minister and give his life a ransom for many," yet Dr. P. in the face of all these scriptures, asserts, that to suppose Christ was under any agony of mind, or that his sufferings implied an adequate expiation for the sins of the world, is a mere arbitrary supposition, not countenanced by any one circumstance in the narration!—To what a daring length will men go in the support of opinion! He that will stand pre-eminent among his fellows, must manifest a pre-eminent boldness!

Christ to have been wholly raised from the dead by the power of the Father.

But the creed of the unitarian goeth on: the commission which Christ gave his apostles after he arose from the dead, they say, had no reference to any thing more than the promulgation of morality. The same system which he had taught, of repentance and the reformation of life, was all that their commission had respect to. And though he said indeed, that his disciples were to baptize as well as preach: and the form of baptism was to be "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" yet all this was simply a form without meaning. 'I think it possible,' saith the late great modern leader of the unitarians, Dr. Priestley, (page 89, of the first volume of his 'Corruptions,') 'that we should never have heard of the opinion of the real distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, if it had not been for the form of baptism supposed, but without reason, to be given in the gospel of St. Matthew, where the apostles are directed to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The meaning of those words,' adds the Dr. 'explained by pretty early writers in the primitive church, as nothing more than baptizing into that religion which was given by the Father, by means of the Son, and confirmed by miraculous power.' What an admirable exposition of our Lord's direction concerning admission into his church!

The ascension of Christ and his office as Intercessor, and the direction given by him before his departure, of asking in his name, as an assurance of being heard and accepted in our prayers;—the unitarian glanceth over these grand points in the faith of a true believer in a very cursory way. 'The texts,' saith Dr. P. (Vol. I. page 204, 205), 'which bear this aspect are very few, perhaps none beside the following. (1 John ii. 1.) "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous."—If any stress be laid on Christ being said to be our *Advocate*, the Holy Spirit is more frequently and properly called so, and by our Lord himself; and he is represented by Paul as acting the part of an Advocate and Intercessor. (Rom. viii. 26.) "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us."—Repentance and the "remission of sin" are said to be preached "in the name of Christ," (Luke xxiv. 47.) and "through him," (Acts. xiii. 38.) And all who believe in him are said to have remission of sin, "through his name," (chap. x. 43.) But this phraseology is easily explained, on the idea, that the preaching of the gospel reforms the world, and that the remission of sin is consequent on reformation.'

The unitarian faith concerning the miraculous powers which Christ promised to his disciples on the coming of the Holy Ghost, is simply reduced to the effects which were wrought upon their minds by the miracles which first accompanied the preaching of the gospel. And all that our Lord intended from it according to their system, was, that by such gifts of the Spirit, the world should be roused to a cordial belief and reception of the man Christ Jesus, and his morality: that taught by his precepts, and encouraged by his example, a general reformation might take place in the circumstances of mankind.

One point more, (and which forms a very proper appendage to the unitarian faith), remains to be noticed: namely, the sense in which they hold the two ordinances of worship appointed by Christ himself; *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*.

By *baptism* they say, is implied no more than that repentance and reformation of life, with all virtuous conversation, is to be observed on an admission into Christ's religion, and which is represented by the administration of water. And by *the supper of the Lord*, so called, because it sets forth Christ's death as

a martyr to his cause, who died in confirmation of its truth, and sealed it with his blood;—is intended a standing memorial only in the church of Christ of that event, and a grateful remembrance by all christians.

That I may not be accused of misrepresentation concerning these two ceremonies of the unitarians, I shall state the account of both in Dr. Priestley's own words, taken from the same history as before quoted. 'Nothing more,' says he, 'seems to have been meant by baptism originally, than a solemn declaration of a man's being a christian, and of his resolution to live as becomes one; and very far was it from being imagined that there was any peculiar virtue in the rite itself.' (Vol. II. page 67.)

And towards the close of the same section, the Doctor adds, 'For my own part I endeavour to adhere to the primitive ideas of the institution: and therefore I consider the baptizing of my children, not as directly implying that they have any interest in it, or in the things signified by it, but as a part of my profession of christianity, and consequently as an obligation which as such I am under, to educate my children, and also to instruct my servants in the principles of the christian religion. In this view of the ordinance of baptism, infants are indirectly interested in it, whether they adhere to the profession of christianity, and thereby secure the blessings of it when they become adults, so as to think and act for themselves, or not.' (Page 75, ibid.

And in reference to the supper of the Lord, the Doctor thus sets down the unitarian faith on that ordinance. 'There is nothing,' saith he, 'in the whole history that I have undertaken to write, so extraordinary as the abuses that have been introduced into the rite of the Lord's supper. Nothing can be imagined more simple in its original institution, or less liable to misapprehension or abuse: and yet in no one instance whatever has

the depravation of the original doctrine and custom proceeded to a greater height, or had more serious consequences.'

The Dr. then goes on to observe, 'that perhaps it was in allusion to the festival of the passover, our Lord appointed his disciples to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him: informing them, that the bread represented his body which was going to be broken, and the wine his blood which was about to be shed for them; and that we are informed by the apostle Paul, that this rite is to continue in the christian church till our Lord's second coming.—Farther than this (he adds) we are not informed in the new testament;—so that the supper is only an open declaration of a man's being a christian.' Vol. II. pages 1, 2. Dr. Priestley's Corruptions of Christianity.* So much then for the general analysis of unitarianism.

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* What a very awful thing it is to behold men thus making light of the ordinances of Christ's own institution. According to the creed of the unitarian, baptism means no more, than 'a man's declaring himself to be a christian!' And the supper of the Lord hath no other design, than 'for a man to declare himself to be a christian.' As if a man's declaration to the world, and not communion with God, was the sole object of religious worship. Our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, so plainly and fully sets forth the great doctrine of the new birth, or regeneration; that let what perversions soever be made by man, the doctrine stands just the same where it did, "except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." As this is the solemn declaration of Christ himself: and as in the moment of his departure he commanded his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: can there be a question remaining, whether baptism doth not imply the necessity of regeneration, and the solemn dedication of the believer in the doctrine, to the love, and obedience, and adoration of the sacred Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

And concerning the supper of the Lord, when we call to mind the season of its institution—when we attend to the discourse of Jesus upon the subject, and connect in one point of view the type of his death in the Jewish passover, explained to us by an apostle, in referring all to Jesus, whom he calls "Christ our passover sacrificed for us," and therefore, (saith he) "let us keep the feast,"—when we hear Christ say, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever:—and except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." When we attend to the consideration of these things, and then hear Christ in the supper, saying, "take eat, this is my body,—this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you," is it possible that any man can seriously

In the next lecture we will go on to consider some of the more special features on the visage of the unitarian, which we have now only glanced at, and view them as they ought to be viewed, a little more particularly.

LECTURE III.

THE CREED OF THE UNITARIAN, CONCERNING THE UNITY OF GOD.

That which forms the foundation of the true faith as peculiarly distinguishing the christian, is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; and by this class of men it is denominated an hypothesis.

'The unity of God, (that is, according to the unitarian definition of unity, denying the Godhead of Christ, and the person and operations of the Holy Ghost,) the unitarian asserts, is the only doctrine known in the whole system of revelation, and to guard this doctrine was the principal object of the jewish religion.'

'The jews, saith Dr. Priestley, (in the introduction of his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, Vol. I. page 1.) were taught by their prophets to expect a Messiah, who was to be descended from the tribe of Judah and the family of David, a person in whom themselves and all the nations of the earth should be blessed; but none of their prophets gave them an idea of any other than a man like themselves, in that illus-

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bring himself to believe, that in all this Christ meant nothing more, but only, in the highly figurative style of the jews and other eastern nations, to say, 'Receive my doctrine, represent often in this supper that ye are my disciples, and think of my life and my dying a martyr for you, to seal the truth of what I have taught by my blood.'—If this had been all, might not all the prophets who died martyrs in confirmation of God's servants, have done the same? And should we not shudder to have it said by any of them; "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed: and except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you?" Men would do well to consider the awful tendency of the daring liberties they take with divine things, and pause over a conduct so truly dangerous.

trious character: and no other did they ever expect, or do they expect to this day.*

The Doctor proceeds, 'Jesus Christ (saith he) whose history answers to the description given of the Messiah by the prophets, made no other pretensions: referring all his extraordinary power to God his Father, who he expressly says, spake and acted by him, and who raised

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* May it not be asked what the prophet Isaiah meant when speaking of the coming of the Messiah, he thus described him.—"Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you; then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Isaiah xxxv. 4, 5. And when we behold Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem performing those very deeds, did the prophet, or did he not, give an idea of any other than a man like themselves in that illustrious character. Compare Isaiah and Matt. xi. 5. Similar passages from numberless parts of this prophet's writings, and from the other prophets, might be brought in proof if necessary. Whom did Jeremiah mean by "the Lord our righteousness?" Jerem. xxiii. 6. Whom did Daniel mean by the anointing the Most Holy? Dan. ix. 24. And who was that Lord whom Zechariah the prophet describes, calling upon the church to "sing and rejoice; for lo! I come and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord;" and thou shalt know that "the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee." Zech. ii. 10, 11. And who was it that Malachi described, but the Messiah, when he declared himself to be the "Lord whom Israel sought, and longed for his" coming, whom the prophet said "should suddenly come to his temple?" Mal. iii. 1.

That the jews never expected any other than simply a man in their Messiah, neither do they to this day, is an assertion that Dr. P. himself could hardly have believed, even though he hath committed it to paper..—But the best comment on this, is the answer which David Levi gave Dr. P. himself upon the subject: 'Your doctrine (saith he) is so opposite to what I always understood to be the principles of christianity, that I must ingenuously confess, I am greatly puzzled to reconcile your principles to the attempt. What! a writer that asserts, 'the miraculous conception of Jesus does not appear to him to be sufficiently authenticated, and that the original gospel of Matthew did not contain it;' that such an one should set himself for a defender of christianity against the jews, is such an inconsistency as I did not expect to meet with in a philosopher, whose sole pursuit hath been in search of truth. 'You are pleased to declare in plain terms that you do not believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus; and that you are of opinion that he was the legitimate son of Joseph.' After such assertions as these, how you can be entitled to the appellation of a christian, in the strict sense of the word, is to me really incomprehensible.—If I am not greatly mistaken, I verily believe that the honour of Jesus, or the propagation of christianity, are things of little moment in your serious thoughts, notwithstanding all your boasted sincerity."—I conceive this quotation from so great a writer as the author of Lingua Sacra, and of 'the Ceremonies of the Jews,' both which are the well-known productions of David Levi, will be considered as a complete refutation of the unitarian's ideas concerning the jews expectations of the character they always looked for in their Messiah.

him from the dead: and it is most evident that the apostles and all those who conversed with our Lord before and after his resurrection, considered him in no other light, than simply as a man approved of God by signs and wonders, which God did by him.* 'From this plain doctrine of the scriptures, (adds the Doctor) a doctrine so consonant to reason and the ancient pro-

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* Did the Son of God indeed make no other pretension during the days of his flesh, than simply that of a man? Is this really true? I shudder at the blasphemy. Did he not say, "I and my Father are one?" Nay, did not the jews take up stones to stone him for the declaration? And when Jesus demanded the cause, did they not expressly say, "because thou being a man makest thyself God." John x. 30 to 38.—Did Christ refer all his extraordinary power to God? In the case of Lazarus's resurrection, did he not declare himself to be the resurrection and the life. And though indeed he addressed his Father before he called Lazarus from the grave; did he not say, "that this was because of the people that stood by, that they might believe that the Father had sent him." John xi. 25—42. And at the healing of the lame man at the pool; did not Jesus say, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work?" And did not the Jews perfectly understand that Jesus claimed an equality with the Father by these expressions? We are told that they sought to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, "making himself equal with God."—And is it possible that any man in the face of these scriptures (to pass by numberless others to the same amount) can dare to say, 'Jesus Christ made no other pretension than that simply of a man?'

And in relation to the apostles, is it true, that neither before nor after our Lord's resurrection, any of them considered him any other than a man? Did Peter receive that gracious testimony from Jesus that flesh and blood had not made known to the apostle who Christ was, but the Father in heaven? and was it really necessary had Jesus been simply no other than a man, for such a secret revelation to be made him, in the knowledge of which the apostle was declared to be blessed? Matt. xvi. 14—17. Did Peter after the vision with which he was favoured in the mount tell the church, that he and his brethren with him were eye witnesses of Christ's majesty, when he received from the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?" 2 Pet. i. 16, 17. And did the apostle all this while, and upon all these occasions, never regard the Lord of life and glory in any other point of view than as a mere man?

Did Paul the apostle consider Jesus simply in his humanity, in those numberless occasions, when ascribing to him all the attributes of Jehovah, and every possible perfection which can distinguish the Godhead? And did Paul tell the Galatians that the revelation he had delivered to them, he never had it from man, neither by man, but from the Lord Jesus Christ; and yet all the while he said this, did he consider Christ only as a man? Was there ever such a contradiction of words as this, upon the supposition that the apostle regarded Christ simply as a man like himself? How lost to all common sense, as well as grace, must those persons be, who in direct contradiction to those plain scriptures impose upon themselves, and attempt to palm upon others such glaring inconsistencies.

phecies, christians have at length come to believe what they do not pretend to have any conception of, and than which it is not possible to frame a more express contradiction. For while they consider Christ as the supreme and eternal God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, they moreover acknowledge the Father and the Holy Spirit to be equally God in the same exalted sense; all three equal in power and glory, and yet all three constituting no more than one God.'

The unitarian therefore, with a rash and impious hand, aims a deadly blow at the whole system of the trinitarian's comfort, and in denying the Godhead of Christ, and both the person and operations of the Holy Ghost, reduceth the system of the gospel to a body of mere ethics, and would bring back mankind to the religion of nature. In support of his hypothesis, his whole appeal is to the standard of reason, contending that as no one can rationally affirm that doctrine to be true which he doth not know to be true: and as no one by reason can explain how the divine nature exists in a pluralty of persons; by consequence this is not true, and therefore, he will not believe it.—And upon this presumptuous reasoning of the human heart the unitarian grounds the foundation of his whole creed.

Dr. Priestley, indeed, as if determined to outrage all modesty, and to step forward beyond the boundary of all respect to inspiration, gives a general answer to every thing that might be set up in defence of scriptural authority. 'As it is not pretended (saith he) that there are any miracles adapted to prove that Christ made the world, I do not see that we are under any obligation to believe it, merely because it was an opinion held by an apostle.' It is not cetainly from a few casual expressions, which so easily admit of other interpretations, and especially in epistolary writings, that we can be authorized to infer that such was the

serious opinion of the apostles. But if it had been their real opinion it would not follow that it was true, unless the teaching of it should appear in their general commission.' (Vol. I. pages 68—70.) And in his letter to Mr. Burn he goes further, and saith, 'In no one sense whatever, even in the lowest of all, is Christ so much as called God in the new testament.' 'It is a circumstance, saith Dr. Price, (in his Sermons on the pre-existence and dignity of Christ,) that in reciting evidences from scripture, some modern socinians would not be convinced by it, were it ever so clear and decisive.' Page 141.

Though it does not come within the plan of my absolute engagement to do any more than give the mere outlines of the unitarian creed, on these points which mark his character; yet I cannot close this lecture on his awful views of the unity of the divine nature out of Christ without relieving my own mind, (and I hope it may prove a subject of relief to any and every true believer in Christ into whose hands these papers may come,) with a brief scriptural account of the divine agency of the whole persons of the Godhead, on some of those grand points in which our nature is so highly concerned.

All the acts of *creation*, are jointly and distinctly ascribed to the sacred Three. Thus in the beginning the Alehim created the heaven and the earth. And through the whole of that chapter, the Alehim is spoken of uniformly as creating all.* That God the Father had his

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* I have often been led to lament, that in the translation of the original scriptures into our English language, the translators have not, as it is evident they might have done, preserved many of the Hebrew words in their own pure form. It would have had a very blessed effect; and very soon would they have been anglicised and incorporated with our mother tongue. And in no one word would it have proved of more importance than in that of Alehim, by the constant use of which, being plural, and importing, as it doth, the plurality of persons in the Godhead, we should from our cradles have imbibed what the very sacred word means, the idea from whose joint power and agency we derive all our

Almighty hand in the works of creation all scripture proclaims,—that all things were created by the Lord Jesus Christ is as plainly declared; and not only "by him," but "for him," saith St. Paul. (Coloss. i. 16.) And that the Holy Ghost was a joint agent in the operation is as certain, for Job was commissioned to tell the church, "the Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." (Job xxxiii. 4.)

And as in creation, so in *redemption*, the gracious act is equally ascribed to the joint work of the whole Three Persons of the Godhead. The Father is said to be the author of it, "who sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world." (John iv. 14.) And the same apostle who gives this record concerning the Father's grace and mercy, records no less that the song he heard in heaven concerning redemption, was particularly addressed to God the Son; "thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) But that the church might not overlook or forget the gracious part which God the Holy Ghost bore in the same transaction, we are told that when Christ offered himself to God for his people, it was "through the eternal Spirit." (Heb. ix. 14.)

Sanctification also, is the result of the acts of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Believers are said to be "sanctified by God the Father." (Jude 6.) To be "sanctified by Christ." (Heb. ii. 11.) "And by God the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 16.)

And in like manner the whole system of salvation, in all the parts of it, is revealed, as issuing from the joint

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blessings. Every one knows, that knows any thing of language, that the word with which we are so conversant in our tongue, God, is of Saxon derivation, and hath no more to do with the scriptures as they concern us, than any other which might have been substituted. But had our translators preserved the sacred word Alehim; and intimated at the same time that it was *plural*, might not this have been a happy means in the Spirit's teaching to have preserved us from the impiety of unitarianism?

love, and grace, and mercy of Jehovah, in his threefold character of persons. Jesus commanded his disciples to "baptize his followers in the name of each and of all." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) His servant the apostle prays for the joint blessing of the whole Godhead, when he desires "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost to be with the church." (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) And if in one place of scripture "the plan of salvation is called the gospel of God," (Rom. i. 1.) in another it is called "the gospel of Christ," (Rom. i. 14.) and in another, "the ministration of the Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 8.) All the operations of grace are said to result from the sacred Three in one. Hence we are told, "that it is God the Father that quickeneth sinners, who were before dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephes. ii. 4, 5.) We are equally informed, "that as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." (John v. 21.) "And the Lord Jesus declared, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth—the flesh profiteth nothing." (John vi. 63.) And to add no more, as in grace so in glory, the everlasting happiness of the faithful is said to result from the love and mercy of all the Persons of the Godhead. It is God the Father who hath prepared for them the kingdom; and it is his pleasure to give it to them. It is God the Son who hath opened the way to it by his blood, and is gone before to take possession of it in their name. And it is God the Spirit who gives the earnest of it in the heart, and worketh a meetness for the enjoyment of it in the people.

And what is the fair inference to be drawn from these and the like scriptures? What would the plain honest unbiassed mind of any man in search of truth, and uninfluenced by any particular hypothesis of a party, conclude from them? Must he not be indeed led to acknowledge, that since each and all possess the same power, exercise the same grace, and manifest their united gracious operations in the same acts as they

concern us, that they are what the scriptures declare they are, " one glorious, eternal undivided Jehovah, existing in a pluraity of persons, the " three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and that these three are one." (1 John v. 7.)*

Dr. Jeremiah Taylor hath made a beautiful observation upon this subject, and I cannot better close my lecture that in his words :—' He (saith the Doctor) who goeth about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and doth it by words and names of man's invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostasis and personalities, priorities in co-equalities, and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk of something he knows not what but the *good man* who feels the power of the Father; and to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, and in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad; *this man*, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the christian doctrine of the Trinity '

LECTURE IV.

THE UNITARIAN'S DENIAL OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF GOD THE SPIRIT.

" Son of man, (said God to the prophet in the valley of dry bones) can these bones live?" And the pro-

* After all that hath been advanced for and against this memorable scripture, the word itself, and the doctrine contained in it, stands just where it was, and there must remain, as long as the scriptures remain, from one generation to another. Mr. Porson and Mr. Travis, with the host of writers on each side, leave it just where they found it. Some may talk of giving it up as an interpretation; and others assert the necessity of its continuance. But what saith the general articles of scripture? What saith John concerning each person of the Godhead, and all the persons together as one God? Let the verse be tried by this standard; let any ordinary candid reader read the chapter, and leave this verse out, and will he not discover the chasm? Will he not see that the *antithesis* is lost—the sense enervated—the argument destroyed?

phet answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest." But when, at the command of God, the prophet called to the wind to breathe upon them, they stood up and became an army. The unitarian rejects the breathings of the Spirit, and all his gracious influences; nay, the very personality of the Holy Ghost he denies.—And from whence shall grace come to give him life? (Ezek. xxxvii. 3—10.)

'There is very little in the scriptures,' saith Dr. Priestley in his 7th Section, Vol. I. page 88, 'that could give any idea of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, besides the figurative language in which our Lord speaks of the Advocate or Comforter, as we render it, (Παρακλητος) that was to succeed him with the apostles after his ascension. But our Lord's language is upon many occasions highly figurative; and it is the less extraordinary that the figure called *personification* should be made use of by him here, as the peculiar presence of the Spirit of God, which was to be evidenced by the power of working miracles, was to succeed in the place of a real person, viz. himself; and to be to them what he himself had been, viz. their Advocate, Comforter, and Guide.

'That the apostles did not understand our Lord as speaking of a real person, at least afterwards when they reflected upon his meaning, and saw the fulfilment of his promise, is evident from their never adopting the same language, but speaking of the Spirit as of a *divine power* only.

'Besides, the writers of the new testament always speak of the Holy Spirit as the same Spirit by which the ancient prophets were inspired, which was certainly never understood by them to be any other than the Divine Being himself enabling them, by his supernatural communications, to foretel future events.

'Also the figurative language in which the Holy Spirit and his operations are sometimes described by

them, is inconsistent with the idea of his being a separate person; as being *baptized* with the Spirit, being *filled* with the Spirit, *quenching* the Spirit, &c. in all which, the idea is evidently that of a *power*, and not that of a *person*.'

It becomes a subject of unceasing regret, to behold the energies of the human mind called forth to employments the very reverse of the promotion of the divine glory; and when men determine to establish a proposition, to sacrifice any thing, and every thing, which stands in the way to the confirmation of it. Thus to hear Dr. Priestley say, that there is very little in the scriptures to give any idea of the Spirit's personality—that the apostles did not understand their Lord as speaking of a real person, when Jesus promised to send the Spirit on his departure; it is truly distressing to hear such bold assertions in direct defiance of the most palpable truths.

Is there indeed very little in the scriptures to countenance the idea of the Spirit's personality? In opposition to this sentiment, I venture to assert, that if all the evidences the word of God contains could bé collected, both of *active* and *passive* properties assigned by the scriptures to God the Holy Ghost, it would form a great mass of evidence in confirmation of his personality.

Did Christ, when speaking to his apostles of the Holy Ghost, never mean a real person? wherefore then did he add, "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him?" Would Jesus have intimated sight and knowledge of an *emanation* or *energy* only, had not the reality of his person been admitted?

Would the Son of God have enjoined baptism in the joint name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, but upon the presumption of the Holy Ghost being as much a person as the Father or the Son? Can any man bring himself to believe, that, upon the supposition of the unitarian creed, Christ is simply a *man*, and the Holy Ghost an

emanation only; that Jesus should command baptism in the name of the Father as *God*, of the Son as *man*, and the Holy Ghost as an *emanation?* What an impious idea, to join a mere *man*, a mere *creature*, with God, the infinite Creator; and to separate between God and his Spirit, by introducing a *man* between them, and giving him precedency to the Holy Ghost! Are the persons who seriously adopt this opinion, aware what a heavy charge is indirectly brought by it against the Son of God?

And is it true that the apostles never speak of the Holy Spirit, but as a *divine power*, and without all idea of any personality in the Holy Ghost? If so, what are we to make of those passages where they ascribe to him personal actions, and such as cannot be at all admitted, but under the conviction of personal consciousness and identity?

"The Spirit (saith Paul) *speaketh* expressly." (1 Tim. iv. 1.) "And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost *said*, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts xiii. 2. Moreover, he was *seen* in a bodily shape, like a dove hovering over the person of Christ at his baptism, Matt. iii. 16. He is spoken of as a *witness*, Heb. x. 15. Paul appeals to him as a *witness*, Rom. ix. 1. and all the offices the Lord Jesus described him by, strikingly set forth his personality. He shall *testify* of me, saith Christ; he shall *teach* you all things; he shall *guide* into all truth, and the like; all which are personal acts.

Moreover; he is described as possessing *personal* feelings and properties; such as joy and gref. "Grieve not, (saith the apostle) the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Ephes. iv. 30. And when Ananias and Sapphira were detected of wilful and daring falsehood, Acts v. 9. the crime the apostle charged them with, was that they had agreed

"to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." Would he have said this, but under the consciousness of the Holy Ghost being a person? Had Peter considered (as Dr. Priestley would have it believed) that the Holy Ghost was nothing more than a *divine power*, and not a person, would he have expressed himself in this manner? Would any man say, how is it that ye have agreed to tempt the *omnipresence* or the *omniscience* of the Lord?

And why should a man be so anxious to remove out of the catholic faith, so blessed a part of it, as that doctrine which holds forth a personal Comforter under all these divine offices in which the word of God represents him: to convince of sin, of righteousness, and judgment; to take of the things of Christ and shew them to us, to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, and direct believers into the patient waiting for Jesus Christ!

I cannot better close this lecture, than in the very striking language of the great Dr. Owen, whose reasoning against the idea of figure and metaphor in those accounts which the scripture give of the blessed Spirit, is unanswerably conclusive. 'If (saith the Doctor) a wise and honest man should come and tell you, that in a certain country where he had been, there is an excellent governor, who wisely discharges the duties of his office; who hears causes, discerns right, distributes justice, relieves the poor, and comforts the distressed; would not you believe that he intended by this description a righteous, wise, diligent, and intelligent *person?* What else could any man living imagine? But now, suppose that a *stranger* should come, and tell you that the former information which you had received was indeed true, but that no *person* was intended by it; it was only a figure of the *sun* or the *wind,* which, by their benign influences rendered the country fruitful and temperate, and disposed the inhabitants to natural kindness and benignity.'

This is exactly the case in the instance before us. The scriptures tell us, that the Holy Ghost governs the church, appoints overseers of it; discerns and judges all things, comforts the faint, strengthens the weak; is grieved and provoked by sin, and the like—can any man credit this testimony, and conceive at the same time of the blessed Spirit any other than as of a *person?* Would any unprejudiced mind fancy that these expressions mean nothing more than a *quality*, or *perfection*, or *attribute* of God? Is it possible to suppose that the whole of these things are mere figures? Would not this be to trifle with our senses, and instead of leading us into all truth, would it not rather tend to guide into error and confusion?*

LECTURE V.

THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN DENIED BY THE UNITARIAN.

In laying open to view the principles of the unitarian creed, the greatest concern is to be obliged to attend to the many presumptuous reasonings by which the several heads of that creed are maintained, in open defiance to the revealed word of God. Among the many, it is no very small portion of the kind, to witness to what is asserted by the unitarian concerning the moral goodness of men.

According to their notions, so far is man, by nature and by practice, from being far gone in sin, and of himself unable to do any one act to obtain divine favour, that an unitarian of some celebrity among the order† seems to think, 'that in process of time, the

* I crave pardon for the freedom which I have taken in this lecture, for making quotations from my volume of Sermons, published some years since, on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost. But the arguments being prepared to my hands, and being to the same point, I ventured to take them for the purpose.

† Mr. Belsham.

earth may revert to its original paradisaical state, and death itself be annihilated.'

Those scriptures, therefore, that teach "that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil, and that continually; (Gen. vi. 5.) that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; (Jer. xvii. 9.) that the whole world is become guilty before God;" (Rom. iii. 19.) these are all exploded from the unitarian bible, and doctrines the most opposite, and the most presumptuous, are substituted in their place.

'That it must be naturally in the power of man to do the will of God, must be taken for granted, (saith Dr. Priestley, in his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, Vol. I. page 281.) if we suppose the moral government of God to be at all an equitable one. He that made man, certainly knew what he was capable of, and would never command him to do, what he had not enabled him to perform.

'Supposing, therefore, that God did not mean to tantalize his creatures in the most cruel and insulting manner, every moral precept in the scriptures is a proof that man has naturally a power of obeying it, and of insuring the reward annexed to the observance of it.'

If the word of God had not fully explained the cause of moral evil, by tracing it to its source, and in the apostacy of the first man, Adam, most satisfactorily answered this horrible charge upon God, in clearing this impeachment of divine justice, and demonstrating the divine mercy, we might have been very solemnly exercised with hearing the unitarian faith upon this subject; but in the sacred scriptures so gracious and condescending an account is given of the whole, and the remedy for man's fall so mercifully at the same time pointed out, that the faithful ought to feel no alarm at such presumptuous reasonings of the human

heart. We there read, that "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" this explains to us, equal to a volume, the sad cause of moral evil, and, in the original apostacy of man, traces it to its source. And from the same unerring authority, we no less learn the merciful plan which the Lord hath appointed for man's recovery, by the great work of salvation in Christ; that "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. And that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."*

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* It will not be altogether irrelative to the subject of this lecture, if I throw in by way of note, an observation on the Barrister's comment, page 56, Part III. of his Hints. Indeed I am at a loss to find terms sufficiently expressive of my astonishment in noticing it. Such a renewed attempt to explain another passage of scripture, after the miserable specimen exhibited concerning the new birth in the former pamphlet surprized me.

With all the prejudices of the unitarian against the doctrine of original sin, no man, I think, but yourself, would have stumbled upon such a chapter as the fifth of Romans to combat that doctrine, where, if the apostle can be supposed to have proved any thing, he hath very fully proved it. Your great predecessor in unitarianism, Dr. Priestley, would hardly have been so bold; he would not at least have committed himself as you have done, by contending on the ground of this chapter concerning Paul's statement of the doctrine; he got rid of such difficulties in a shorter way by admitting Paul's meaning, but calling it *the inconclusive reasoning of an apostle.* See his Corruptions of Christianity, Vol. II. page 370.

But let me attend to your observations on this point. You assert that when Paul saith, (Rom. v. 19.) "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," &c. that this is induced by *following the fatal example of one man.* Suffer me to ask whether you can find a single word in the original, or even in the translation, to favour such a construction of the apostle's phrase? Is there a possibility without doing violence to the context, as well as to the verse itself, to foist in so daring an exposition? Αμαρτωλοι κατεσαθεσαν in the one instance of *disobedience*, and δικαιοι κατεσαθησονται in the other of *obedience*, hath no one reference whatever to the idea of any thing wrought or induced by *example.* The verb καθιστημι *constituo*, to *constitute*, or *make*, and in the passive voice, implies a thing so constituted or made, from being *acted upon*, and not *acting* or doing any personal act by which the person or thing is so constituted or made; and indeed the apostle's own words, and even in the translation, saith as much. The sinners are said to be *made* sinners, and the righteous *made* righteous, expressly so by the *personal disobedience of one man*, in the one instance, and by the *personal obedience of the other*, in the other; so that both the sinners and the righteous *so made*, are altogether passive in those acts.

But though the word of God hath so fully solved the difficulty, in assigning both the cause and the cure of

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Hence, Sir, your statement of these things, being wrought by *example*, is altogether a fiction of your own, unauthorized either by the translation, or the original greek.

Moreover. Had you attended to the context of the chapter, and particularly to what the apostle had just before said, you must have seen (unless prejudice compelled you to shut your eyes against all conviction) that the *disobedience* the apostle is speaking of in this verse, is the result of the *original sin* in the first man, as proved by the consequences of it. "By one man," saith he, verse 12, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. How have *all* sinned? Not by *example;* for Paul adds, verse 14, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude (after the example) of Adam's transgression;" as in the case of infants, whose early death prevented the possibility of sinning by example, or committing any *actual* transgression, and yet they died; death reigned over them. Wherefore did they die? Paul before said; "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned*." If, then, infants just born, die because death is the consequence of sin, and yet in themselves they have never committed one *actual* transgression, can any thing more fully prove the doctrine of *original* sin? If all die, because all have sinned, and infants also die, though they have not *personally* sinned; then must it undeniably follow, that their death is the effect of *original* sin, the taint of which is in their nature, and not from following an example, where that example could never operate.

Besides, Sir, if you would use candour upon this occasion, and had the desire of discovering with whom the truth is, and not to gratify a party spirit, which gave rise to this controversy, you could not but allow that the whole drift of Paul's epistle, both in this chapter and every preceding one, is to set down among the truths of God the universal corruption of human nature by the fall. Hence he begins in the *first* chapter of his epistle to the Romans to sketch the portrait of mankind as found in the gentile world; and the picture is full of the darkest shades indeed. In the *second* he paints, in equally disgusting features, the state of the jewish church: and from both he follows up the subject in the *third* chapter, to shew that, as the *former* could not be justified by the law of nature, neither the *latter* by the law of Moses, and the whole world was become guilty before God; "therefore by the deeds of the law could no flesh be justified in his sight." Having thus established the doctrine of universal corruption as a matter unquestionable and not to be denied, the apostle prosecutes the same subject in his *fourth* chapter, and in the case of Abraham, the great father of the faithful, he shews that his justification before God was not from any works of righteousness which he had done, for he was in a state of uncircumcision at the time this grace was manifesed towards him, but that it was wholly the result of God's free mercy; "his faith was therefore imputed to him for righteousness." The apostle then enters upon his *fifth* chapter to trace back the source of moral evil to the first original transgressor, in order to shew that, as by the disobedience of this one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, even the Lord Jesus Christ, many were made righteous: and in order to illustrate these grand and momentous truths in the fullest manner, the apostle makes use of a striking *antithesis* by which he demonstrates, in the most luminous points imaginable, that "as by the offence of one, judgment

moral evil, yet the unitarian, in the supposed rectitude of the human heart, denies the whole of any natural taint of sin in the circumstances of man, and reprobates the doctrine as dishonourable to God, and totally unknown in the bible.

Though my province is merely to sketch the outlines of the unitarian creed, and not to refute the principles of it; yet I confess, if I was delivering these lectures by word of mouth, I should feel a strong inclination to descant somewhat more largely upon the doctrine of

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came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And Paul closeth the whole subject with a beautiful prosopopœia, in which he personifies sin and grace, and ascribes to them their different reigns; one unto death, and the other unto life. And here again, as in the former case, the very idea of obedience wrought by *example* is wholly foreign to the apostle's doctrine. "As sin (saith he) reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life." Now this righteousness cannot possibly mean the righteousness of creatures such as we are: for in this case, (as the apostle in another part of this same epistle hath shewn, Rom. xi. 6.) "if it be of works, then is it no more of grace, for otherwise grace is no more grace." But the reign of grace to eternal life, is evidently that grace which is contrasted to the reign of sin, which is death; and this the apostle most decidedly shews is God's free grace, "in and through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Largely as I have trespassed in this note, I cannot dismiss it without first adding, that whatever effect these observations may leave in *your* mind, I am not without hopes, that the Lord may commission them to some usefulness to *others*. It is possible that among my readers there may be not a few that are at present tinctured with the leaven of unitarianism. And I cannot but wish, that such may see the fallacy of those arguments by which that sect is amused and supported. It is an awful thing to trifle with the word of God, and to take the freedom which you have done, by commenting in direct opposition to the plain phrase and context of the apostle upon it. Whatever in the lightness of your mind you may think of it now, there is a time coming when the recollection of it will no longer amuse. It may afford merriment to readers of the same complexion with yourself, to abuse those whom you call 'the blind followers of Calvin;' and to denominate the doctrine of imputed righteousness, as *their doctrine*. But, Sir, these charges must attach themselves to Paul and not Calvin; for the apostle taught it in the church, as this epistle very plainly sets forth, before Calvin was born, and there it will as plainly be found, when you and I shall be as Calvin now is, among the dead. So that if it be 'an error (as you say) that contradicts itself,' let the apostle look to it, for it becomes his province and not ours to answer it, and depend upon it, the scripture will make good its own doctrines. But had you read with proper attention the verse preceding the one you have commented upon, you would have found a complete assertion of what you vainly suppose an error. There, Sir, you may learn that not only *many* were made sinners by one man's disobedience, but that by the offence of *one*, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation. Rom. v. 18.

original sin, and from the *experimental* evidences of it in life, endeavour to prove the reality of its existence. And the observations which my friend the Barrister hath furnished concerning the writings of certain celebrated female authors of the present day, afford large scope for this service. He saith, page 73, Third Part of Hints, &c. that 'Miss Edgeworth in her volumes on Practical Education, hath manifested more sound sense, than is to be found in all the voluminous labours of the Calvinistic priesthood taken altogether.' And he adds, in a note, 'the name of Mrs. Barbauld on this occasion deserves to be mentioned with peculiar respect.'

I have not the happiness of knowing either the persons or the writings of those celebrated women, but I take for granted, that their volumes form the system of education among the higher circles of the highest order. It will be worth our while therefore to hear their plan, and then judge of the effect of it.

'It may be laid down, saith Miss E. (in her Practical Education) as a first principle, that we should preserve children from the knowledge of any vice, or any folly, of which the idea has never entered their minds, and which they are not necessarily disposed to learn by example. Children who have never lived with servants, who have never associated with ill educated companions of their own age, and who in their own family have heard nothing but good conversation, and seen none but good examples, will, in their language, their manners, and their whole disposition, be not only free from many of the faults common among children; but they will absolutely have no idea that there are such faults. It is the same with bad habits, falsehood, caprice, dishonesty, obstinacy, revenge, and all the train of vices, which are the consequences of mistaken or neglected education, which are learned by *bad example*, and which are not inspired by *nature*, need scarcely be known to children whose minds have from their infancy

been happily regulated. Such children should be sedulously kept from contagion; their minds are untainted, they are safe in that species of ignorance which alone can deserve the name of bliss. No books should be put into the hands of this happy class of children, but such as present the best models of virtue; there is no occasion to shock them with caricatures of vice; such caricatures they will not understand to be well drawn, because they are unacquainted with any thing like the originals. Examples to deter them from faults to which they have no *propensity*, must be *useless*, and may be *dangerous*.'

So much for the writings—now for the effect. These ladies call their Treatise, 'Practical Education,' and therefore it is not the *theory* of the writer, no, nor the commendation of the Barrister, that is to form the standard; but the *practical* consequences that follow by which the excellency of their works is to be ascertained.

The propriety of keeping children from all bad examples is not a new thought in this system of education; long before those ladies were born, every system adopted this maxim. But, passing this by as having nothing in it of particularity to recommend those ladies' scheme of education on this account beyond others, let us look at the *practical* effects of this 'Practical Education.'

If this new mode of teaching children be true—and if the human mind be what those ladies declare it, *charta pura*—if they have *absolutely* no idea that there are such faults as are learnt only by *bad example*, and are not derived from *nature:* then must it undeniably follow, that nothing is written upon such hearts but what is pure, and amiable, and lovely. Then is the golden age realized!—'*this happy class of children*,' (as Miss E. calls them) come forth '*a virtuous class of men:* and in all the higher departments of life we have

a right to expect characters which form and direct the morals of mankind.

And is it so? Since (as Miss E. saith) 'falsehood, caprice, dishonesty, obstinacy, revenge, and all the train of vices are the consequences of mistaken or neglected education, not learnt but by bad example, and not inspired by nature—and as these are not known by our *high bred children*, so surely they cannot be practised by our *high fed men*.' Happy, happy nation, I would say, if this be the case! Farewell for ever these baleful passions of our nature, with all the train of vices! Our great men are all good men, and we shall never hear of adultery any more. No divorces, no separations of men and wives, no duels, no revenge, for as these vices *are only learnt by example*, and *this happy class of the children of the great* derive nothing of taint *from nature*, the generation taught by this system will be virtuous indeed!

But pause, what saith the word of God to all this? And what saith matter of fact, in the present history of the day?

Was there ever a period since the reformation, or before it, in which notorious, open, and barefaced sins abounded, equal to the present? In all the annals of our country, did ever an æra commence with a more portentous aspect of evil in consequence of the crying sins of it, than this nineteenth century? Doth God say by the prophet, "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out and blood toucheth blood, therefore shall the land mourn." Hosea iv. 1, 2. And have we been mourning as a land under God's sore judgment of war so many years; do we behold those causes for which the Lord saith, "the land mourns," and are we reeking under their effects

—and shall we be told that such is the state of *this happy class of children*, that there is no occasion to shock them with caricatures of vice; such caricatures they will not understand to be well drawn, 'because they are unacquainted with any thing like the originals?' Is Miss E. or Mrs. Barbauld, or our Barrister, unacquainted with such originals?

I am an old man going out of life, and with respect to my own personal interest in the eventual consequences of such a system of education, it is of no concern. But when I behold the solemn truths of God in the bible laid aside, to make way for such systems of teaching, and the very reverse of what the bible solemnly proclaims, set up in its place;—when I hear the word of God decidedly say, that "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child;" (Prov. xxii. 15.) and then am told by those who set up for teachers, that *this happy class* have no *propensity* to evil, that their minds are *untainted*. When I hear the doctrine "of original sin," (which children of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, should be taught from their cradle) laid aside, the Godhead of Christ denied, and redemption through his blood set at nought;—when I see doctrines substituted in the place of these grand truths, which are only calculated to flatter and soothe the rising generation in their sins, and to prompt their parents to believe in direct opposition to what passeth in their own hearts, I beg to enter my warmest protest against such systems of education. They are what scripture in its nervous language calls, "sewing pillows under arm holes," putting "stumbling blocks in the way of the blind." (Ezek. xiii. 18. Levit. xix. 14.) And I cannot but tremble for my country under such awful circumstances! Surely there is a peculiar emphasis in the words of God by the prophet, in application to such a state as this in the present period: "shall not I visit for these things, saith the Lord? shall not

my soul be avenged of such a nation as this?" Jerem. v. 9, 29.

LECTURE VI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT DENIED BY THE UNITARIAN.

The denial of "original sin" would not have been complete had not the denial of "the atonement of Christ" been added to it. Both therefore form very conspicuous departments in the scale of the unitarian faith. Indeed this doctrine takes in a larger sweep. For upon the presumption that the Son of God became incarnate, that incarnation implied the purpose, in giving himself "a sacrifice for sin." The unitarian therefore gets rid of the whole system of redemption at once, in the denial of Christ's Godhead; which of consequence renders, in the unitarian's view, the doctrine of original sin in a vain hypothesis, and redemption from it a mere figure of speech.

But let him give in the outlines of his own faith in this particular, in the words of the great modern leader of the party, Dr. Priestley.

'As the doctrine of the "divine unity," saith he, (page 152, vol. I.) was infringed by the introduction of that of the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, (as a person distinct from the Father,) so the doctrine of the *natural placability of the divine being*, and our ideas of the equity of his government, have been greatly debased by the gradual introduction of 'the modern doctrine of atonement:' which represents the divine being as withholding his mercy from the truly penitent till a full satisfaction be made to his justice, and for that purpose as substituting his own innocent Son in the place of sinful men.'

'This corruption of the genuine doctrine of revelation

is connected with the doctrine of the divinity of Christ.' He adds, 'it is a gross misrepresentation of the character and moral government of God—it hath no countenance whatever in reason or the scriptures—and is a departure from the primitive and genuine doctrines of christianity.'

From this general statement, it will be evident in what a trifling light the unitarian considers the doctrine of 'the atonement.' And indeed as he regards human beings in themselves, as needing no cleansing from the impurities of 'original sin,' and repentance as sufficient to answer for actual transgressions; it cannot be supposed that he sets any value upon the means proposed in the scriptures, for washing sinners from their sins in the blood of Christ.

But when the unitarian comes forward to the assertion of these things, the true believer is astonished, as well he may, at an impiety so daring, becomes desirous to know how the unitarian gets over the difficulty of doing away the vast account which the whole bible gives of this one great event of the church, from the moment of the fall, to the close of the canon of scripture. Every thing in the word of God is plainly and fully directed to this one purpose, to preach the doctrine of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Rom. xiii. 8.)

What construction doth a man of this complexion put upon all that variety of passages which the apostles of Christ make use of, concerning the death of their Lord, and the object of that death. Paul assserts, that Christ hath made our peace by the blood of his cross, that he gave himself a ransom, that God set him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and the like.

Peter following up the same doctrine proclaims, that "Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just for the

unjust, to bring us to God. Ye were not redeemed (he tells the church,) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot."

John to the same amount declares, that "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin!"

And what saith the unitarian in answer to these and the like scriptures?—In his view the whole is figurative.

'Christ is frequently said to have died for us,' saith Dr. P. (page 199, vol. I.) 'but in general this may be interpreted of his dying *on our account*, or for *our benefit*. Or if when rigorously interpreted, it should be found, that if Christ had not died we must have died, it is still however only *consequentially* so, and by no means properly and directly so as a *substitute* for us.'—How natural then was it, especially to writers accustomed to the strong figurative expressions of the east, to say, that *he died in our stead*, without meaning it in a strict and proper sense; as if God had absolutely required the death of Christ in order to satisfy his justice for our sins, and as a necessary means of forgiving us.

But setting prejudice and prepossession apart, can these numerous testimonies to one and the same doctrine, be all rendered figurative? Is it meant figuratively when Jesus himself saith, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many?" (Matt. xx. 28.) Did his forerunner John the baptist mean it figuratively, when pointing to Jesus as he walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?" John i. 29. Are lambs slain in sacrifice figuratively? Can there be any other meaning but that of an atoning sacrifice? And did John, the beloved apostle, mean somewhat figurative, when beholding the glorified in-

habitants of the New Jerusalem, and hearing their hymns of praise, he tells the church that it was particularly addressed to the Lamb, because he had been slain, and had redeemed them to God by his blood. Rev. v. 8, 9.

LECTURE VII.

THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES DENIED BY THE UNITARIAN.

The fallibility of the sacred writers of the holy scriptures is among the dogmas of the unitarian, as a most important point to be insisted upon. And hence upon every occasion, an appeal is made against their decision.

'We acknowledge, (says one of them) the authority of the books of the old and new testament, but we do not suppose that our English translation of them is free from errors. It is allowed by all parties that they were translated by men equally fallible with ourselves. It is a natural supposition, therefore, that they have not always given us their true meaning; but that in some instances they may have been misled by ignorance, and in others by prejudice. This we are persuaded is the case, because many errors, which in their circumstances it was impossible for them to avoid, have since been discovered."*

In opposition to this it may be said, what Paul the apostle hath advanced, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," (2 Tim. iii. 16.) and it is a full reply to those remarks. If all inspiration be given by God, of consequence all is to be received as such; for if a partial inspiration was to be admitted, we should be so much at a loss to know what was inspired and what was not, that the whole would be rendered nugatory,

* See Mr. Potter's Defence of Unitarianism, page 2.

And with respect to the sacred writers having erred, or their translators having frequently mistaken their meaning, this is quite begging the question. Supposing the possibility of such a thing, certainly this might have proved as favourable to the unitarian cause as to the orthodox.

In my controversy some *fifteen years since* with Mr. Porter, I was very much amused with marking down several of the exceptions he had made against the doctrine of a plenary inspiration of the scriptures, and the objections he brought against it.

The prophet Isaiah calls Christ, "Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God," and the like. Mr. Porter saith, 'it is highly probable that the original text is corrupted.' So again, the prophet Jeremiah speaking of Christ, saith, "this is the name whereby he shall be called, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Mr. Porter saith, 'there is good reason to believe that this is not the proper translation.'

Christ himself, John iii. 13, saith, "that no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Mr. Porter saith, 'if these words be taken in their literal sense, the assertions they contain are not true.'

Paul the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, speaking of God saith, chap. iii. 3. "Who created all things by Jesus Christ." Mr. Porter saith, 'that it is highly probable the words Jesus Christ are an interpolation.'

The same apostle in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, x. 9, on that passage: "neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted."—Mr. Porter saith, 'that concerning this passage, it may be observed, that it is very probable our reading is not the true one.'

And when John the beloved apostle, speaking of our Lord, describes him as the "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," Rev. i. 11. Mr. Porter saith,

'these words are spurious, and ought to be struck out of our bibles.'

The only answer I returned to those remarks, was a request, that Mr. Porter would be candid enough to put in large characters over his meeting door what he had now advanced, that 'unitarians do not believe in the full inspiration of scripture.' And I concluded, if after such a fair warning, any man was weak enough to attend a place of worship of such a description, it was to his peril and confusion.

CONCLUDING LECTURE.

ON THE STRIKING SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE UNITARIAN AND THE MAHOMETAN FAITH.

It is a fact not remaining to be disputed, that the prophet of Mecca founded the pretensions to his mission, on the failure, as he termed it, of the religion of Jesus Christ. Dr. White, in his Bampton Sermons, (page 77,) describes the features of mahometanism, that 'with the jew he maintained the inspiration of Moses, the authority of the pentateuch, and of the prophetic writings. With the christian he admitted the divine mission of Jesus Christ, and the truth of the gospel. Nay, he professed, and with much plausibility, that he was sent to purify a religion which originally came down from heaven, from the pollutions it had unhappily contracted during its residence among a frail and degenerate race of beings: to shut the book, to close the seal of prophecy, and to communicate the last gracious offers of divine mercy and instruction to sinful man.'

And indeed wherefore should it not be so? The features of mahometanism and unitarianism are so strikingly similar, that the one hath as great a pretension to claim alliance with the christian as the other.

For example,—the professed object of Mahomet's religion, as he declared himself, was 'to restore the doctrine of the divine unity.' And the unitarians in England, (as I shewed in my last letter,) addressed his excellency the ambassador of the emperor of Morocco, with an assurance, that this was the one great object of their wishes, and for which they coveted an union with the emperor to confirm it, and to punish what they termed 'idolizing christians.' Making this the one grand object of their faith, the unitarians complimented the emperor of Morocco for defending that faith with the sword, which they desired to defend with their pen: and they offered their assistance to purge the Koran of certain errors which had crept into it after Mahomet's death.

The first leading object of the mahometan's creed is to contend for the divine unity. This also forms the first principle in the faith of the unitarian.

To restore a pure religion of nature, is the professed design of the mahometan. And what is there beyond the same object, of restoring natural religion in the principles of the unitarian?

The impostor Mahomet frequently and boldly affirmed, that his mission had been foretold by the prophets, and more particularly by Christ in the gospel; and that his object was to introduce the pure worship of the divine nature through the earth in the unity of the Godhead.

The unitarian comforts himself with similar hopes, 'the great article of the unity of God, (saith Dr. Priestley,) will in time be uniformly professed by all that bear the christian name; and then, and not before, may we hope and expect, that being also freed from other corruptions and embarrassments, it will recommend itself to the acceptance of jews and mahometans, and become the religion of the whole world.—But so long as christians in general are chargeable with this fundamental error of worshipping more gods than

one, jews and mahometans will always hold their religion in abhorrence.'*

The unitarian denies the grand and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, 'original sin, the doctrine of the atonement, and the full inspiration of the scriptures.'

The mahometan in like manner, claims infallibility to his Koran, to the total rejection of the distinguishing articles of the gospel. His Koran he calls the book of God: and he pronounceth them faithful and blessed which receive his doctrines, and denounceth vengeance on idolaters and all who oppose its authority.

The mahometan denies the death of Christ, and consequently, all the blessed effects of it. 'They have spoken against Mary, (saith the Koran), a grievous calumny; and have said, Verily, we have slain Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of God: yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness.'†

And what saith the unitarian? 'Christ died, it is true, but he did not die to make satisfaction for the sins of men: the true end and design of Christ's death was as an example of suffering, and to confirm the certainty of his doctrine by sealing it with his blood.'‡

The unitarian asserts, that 'Christ himself and his apostles never assumed any higher character than the prophet and servant of God: a man like ourselves, to be descended from the tribe of Judah and the family of David.'§

The Koran, speaking of Christ, saith, 'Verily, Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the apostle of God and his word, and a spirit proceeding from him. Be-

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* Dr. Priestley's Corruptions of Christianity, vol. i. page 151.

† Koran, page 79.

‡ Sect. I. and II. Priestley's Corruptions, pages 154, 171.

§ Corruptions of Christianity, vol. i. pages 1, 2.

lieve therefore in God and his apostles, and say not, there are three Gods. Forbear this, it will be better for you. God is but one God. Far be it from him that he should have a son.'*

Such, in a very striking point of view, is the similarity of features in both religions. And the gradation from one to the other is soon made. For wherein do they differ in what may be deemed the essentials of christianity? The Arabian prophet and all his followers, affected to be called unitarian. The mussulman, as well as the unitarian, rejects the Godhead of Christ, the doctrine of the trinity, the necessity of salvation, and the atonement by Christ. And though the unitarian may feel indignant to have such a comparative statement made between his tenets and the tenets of the mahometan; yet the resemblance in what may be considered the leading points of both religions, is too glaring to be denied. The unitarian still wishes to be called christian, but certainly there is nothing remaining in his creed but the name. And I cannot see in what light he can regard the great author of christianity, who, while asserting a oneness between him and the Father, totally denies his Godhead, and thereby directly disavows what Christ saith to be true.

And if it now came within the design of those Lectures, or would the limits I wish to observe allow the opportunity, or were the patience of those who have kindly followed me thus far, not sufficiently exercised; I should very much delight to contrast to this mere skeleton of religion, the true body and substance of christianity; and in bringing forward the real *bearings* of the pure gospel, which, (to use the Barrister's own words,) 'require to be brought forth fully, and placed under the public observation;' shew how blessed in itself, and how suited it is to the wants of our nature,

* Koran, page 80.

for all the circumstances of life. It needs indeed only to be known to be beloved, exhibiting, as it doth, the one great and gracious ordinance of heaven, for the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ.

Unlike the empty, unsatisfying, and wretched system of a dry morality, which proposeth indeed precepts, but affords no help to a poor sinner to perform them; the salvation by Jesus brings with it pardon, mercy, and grace, and in the aids of the blessed Spirit, holds forth to the humble endeavours of the sincere penitent, the means of attainment; and while forwarding the everlasting interests of another state, tends to promote all the comforts of the present. It corresponds, indeed, to the character given of it by the apostle, "it is a godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

But I must suppress this pleasure, having so very far exceeded the limits I had proposed.

I cannot take my leave of the Barrister, however, before that I set him right in a subject which he hath touched upon: in the proper apprehension and right understanding of which, not only he and I, but all mankind are highly concerned.

Unhappily the Barrister knows so little of scripture, that he is perpetually stumbling at the threshold, and never enters into the full apprehension of the subject which he presumes to write upon.

In stating therefore his views of the judgment-seat of Christ, he fancieth in direct defiance of what the word of God declares, when it saith, that "every mouth must be stopped, and all the world found guilty before God," (Rom. iii. 19;) that the virtuous unitarian will stand forward and plead his virtues before the tribunal, and will meet with applause from his judge.—The very idea of such horrible presumption, even in

the contemplation of it, without realizing the deed, is enough to make every one to shudder!

Poor man! he is thus looking forward to that tremendous day of account, and while trusting *all* to his own upright conscientious conduct, he advanceth in the moment of this confidence, *another untruth*, by way of heightening his representations, and to give the better colour to his picturing.

'When standing at the bar of God, (says he,) will the sinner dare to fling such an imputation on his justice, as to declare, that he never imparted to him *the ability* to fulfil those commands, for his disobedience to which he is called upon to answer? What must we think of those who teach such shocking tenets, as the true doctrines of that religion, of which they arrogantly stile themselves, the evangelical ministers? When, at this solemn tribunal, the sinner shall be called upon to answer for the transgression of those *moral laws*, on their obedience to which their salvation was made to depend; will it be sufficient that, with unutterable terror and alarm, he declares himself to have been taught when on earth to believe, the gospel had neither terms nor conditions; and that his salvation was secured by a covenant which procured him pardon and peace from all eternity: a covenant, the effects of which, no folly or after act whatever could possibly destroy?' Hints, 3rd Part, pages 102, 103.

This false and unjust representation may be very amusing in your light hours; but if, as Christ hath declared, every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment: would it not be well for to consider, what account will be demanded for every false and malicious word that a man shall deliberately write, with a view to pervert the truth in the earth, (Matt. xii. 36.) What an awful blindness must that man be under, who, while solemnly

discoursing upon the most solemn subject that can possibly arrest the most interesting affections of the heart, can deliberately write down what he knows to be false, and yet in the moment is confidently saying, that he expects to be rewarded at that day "according to his works!"

You cannot but know in the very moment of your writing, though twisting and perverting words in the manner you have done, that the whole sum and substance of the gospel salvation, as preached or published by evangelical ministers, is preached to the broken in heart, and to the truly penitent. To none of which hath it ever been said, that pardon, mercy, and peace are proclaimed, but on the presumption of their being true and sincere penitents. The covenant of redemption by the blood and righteousness of Christ, is set forth to no other. And where God gives repentance to the sinner, the ministers of Jesus are commanded to proclaim the divine mercy in the forgiveness of sins;—"knowing," (as the apostle saith,) "that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," (Gal. ii. 16.)

The preachers of salvation by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, acting under such high authority, can have no cause for alarm. They are taught by the unerring standard of the sacred word, that "by the deeds of the law, can no flesh be justified in God's sight." And if "the whole world are become guilty before God,"—even supposing for argument's sake, (which but for argument's sake, not a single moment would I admit the bare idea,) that the *unitarian* faith be true;—they rest upon ground as safe, and are as fit objects for mercy, as those who despise their principles. Are they not as moral, as upright, and conscientious as unitarians? And will not their claims to divine favour be as fair?

But reverse the case. Suppose what all revelation

proclaims, that the great Judge of all the earth is one with the Father over all, God blessed for ever. Where will the unitarian hide his head in the tremendous day of account, when Jesus shall "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe?" How will he look up, who hath despised his "GODHEAD, trodden under foot the Son of God, hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. x. 29.)

This great day of God will soon arrive; how far soever distant the final judgment of the world may be, is not for you or me to say;—but as far as it concerns us both, it cannot be very far off, and may be near indeed.

As to the momentous event of that day, *in relation to myself*, I freely and fully declare, if my acceptance before God was made to depend upon a single act of my obedience, through the whole course of my life, my hopes of divine favour would be over. I cannot discover one act in the least meritorious. I should not only shudder for my sins, but tremble for my virtues: convinced as I am, that if the whole were brought into account, with all the abatements, motives, helps, and the many causes which I know not of, but which will then appear, and must all be brought forward to make a right judgment;—the hand-writing of the whole would, I am persuaded, be seen; and when weighed in the balance, I should be found wanting, (Daniel v. 24.) Oh, Sir! it is blessed to have God's righteousness to plead, when sin and Satan, law and justice, give in their verdict, and conscience testifies to the charge.

And do allow me in relation to you, to observe, concerning this solemn day of decision, that it may be well to give the subject a frequent consideration, in a serious hour. It is not to be thought upon in the coolness of philosophy—somewhat more is needed. *Not guilty* to numberless transgressions you cannot plead.

And holding the Son of God as a *mere* man—how can redemption be then hoped for in his blood? And what paleness, dread, and horror, must it occasion, to appear before a judge so despised!

God in mercy grant, if it be his holy will, that it may be said of you concerning your present contempt of Christ, as Peter had in commission to tell the Jews: "I wot, said he, brethren, that through ignorance ye did it," (Acts.) And much would it rejoice my heart, if "God should grant repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," in the instance of many an unitarian beside yourself, "that you might be recovered out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.)

A LETTER

TO

WILLIAM HALE, ESQ.

IN ANSWER TO HIS ADDRESS

UPON

THE DANGEROUS TENDENCY OF THE LONDON FEMALE PENITENTIARY.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."— 1 Thess. v. 21.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.

SIR,

YOU compel me to follow you in your 'Address to the Public,' upon what you are pleased to denominate 'The Dangerous Tendency of the London Female Penitentiary.'

The very decided part which I have taken in the interests of that noble Institution, demands this tribute from me;—and, indeed, had not the charity itself this claim, yet the very distinguished manner in which you have thought proper to notice my writings upon the occasion, would have been with me a sufficient stimulus. Both the duty I owe myself, and the respect I would wish to shew you, would make it criminal in me to be silent;—and as it behoves me to attend to what you have advanced upon the subject, so the expediency of answering it is, with me, instant. The first sight I had of your Address was yesterday;—the first leisure moment of the present day I have devoted to a due attention to it: and now, I beg to transmit to you, through the same channel of the public as you yourself have chosen to convey your's, my sentiments upon it.

When I venture to call the London Female Penitentiary a noble institution, (the tendency of which you think to be dangerous,) I beg to state the reasons upon which an opinion, so opposed to your's, is founded.

Allow me, Sir, sufficient credit in your esteem, to believe me sincere when I say, that I did not step forward the voluntary advocate of the London Female Peniten-

tiary, but upon the best grounded and most satisfying evidences of its utility. I did not advance a word, either from the pulpit or from the press, in its favour, before I had received very ample conviction that it was altogether calculated, under the divine blessing, to accomplish the great purposes proposed from it, and to the attainment of which all its energies are directed. Nay, Sir, I did not, on my part, endeavour to call up the public attention, to throw in their aids to its support, until that it had, in several instances, notwithstanding the infancy of its being, given proofs that a gracious God had blessed it.

But in obtaining these testimonies of its excellency, I did not, indeed, look only to what is said of it in the printed plan, rules, and orders, by which it is proposed to be governed; neither did I gather my favourable opinion from mere report, or the approbation of any man. I determined to judge for myself: and, under this impression, I did that, Sir, which I hope you will pardon me if I say I strongly suspect you have never done, (but which, I must take the freedom to add, is indispensable to the forming a right judgment:)—I visited in person the Penitentiary, and went over every ward and department of it. I examined not in theory, but in the practical parts, the principles, one by one, by which it is conducted. I took a distinct and leisurely survey of the whole; and did not give over my investigation, before I had seen enough to bring away with me such credentials, as decidedly proved it meriting the fullest encouragement;—and I venture to believe, that the evidences I received were such as would satisfy every candid mind who would visit the Penitentiary in person, and form his conclusions, not from mere abstract reasoning, but from plain matters of fact, and such as came under his own personal knowledge;* and, if I

* Though I am not authorized to invite the public to a similar inspection of the Penitentiary, as was granted to me, yet, I am well persuaded that, to the

might be permitted to add one observation more upon this part of the subject, without danger of incurring the imputation of vanity, I would say, that the exercise of a parochial ministry in a town like Plymouth, for *thirty years*, and where, for obvious reasons, a very numerous body of these wretched women abound, may be supposed to have made me painfully conversant with their sad history. I have been in the constant habit of visiting the sick and dying chambers of such characters, equal perhaps to any minister whatever; and it may be reasonably supposed, in such a school, that the science of their misery, with the best probable means of relief, mignt be learnt. Many a lecture, indeed, and with a voice too loud and too impressive to be soon effaced from my mind, hath been read to me on these occasions!—and, however Mr. Hale may be offended with the observation, or however extensive his parochial information may have been to have led him to think otherwise, I hesitate not to conclude, that a Penitentiary, and not a workhouse, is the best suited to the recovery of women of the town.

But while, with all becoming modesty, I would put in a claim for some degree of competency in forming a right judgment upon this subject, I confess I feel no small reluctancy in contending the point with you. I fear to offend:—I fear to give displeasure to a mind of

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committee, in whose hands the government of it is vested, the visit of every one who can take interest in the concerns of these poor outcasts of society, will be no only welcome, but thankfully received. Indeed I have heard that it is very much the wish of the governors the Asylum should be visited, that the public may judge for themselves how to appreciate the merits of its pretensions to favour, and how far its claims ought to be admitted to support: and, I beg to observe, by way of recommending the Penitentiary to their notice, that the house itself is admirably formed for the inspection of visitors, without exposing the penitents to the danger of being seen, or the penitents seeing the strangers; for, as the several suites of rooms on every floor open into each other, the matron, who leads all visitors through the apartments, is enabled to shew the whole by removing the penitents from one ward to another, as the strangers are passing through the house; so that not a shadow of a person is to be seen, nor a voice heard, while the premises are inspecting.

benevolence. Regarding the London Female Penitentiary in the very high esteem I hold it; and viewing it as one among the many blessed means which God, in his providence, hath appointed for promoting the divine glory, in the salvation of sinners, I am free to say, that its interests lie very near my heart;—so that if, in the ardour of contention, while warm with the subject, in that warmth I should lose sight of the respect I bear towards your person, (and which, if I know any thing of myself, I would cherish with the greatest regard,) it would pain me much.

The manly and open mention which you have made of your name, in the title-page of your Address,—the fair and just quotations which you have taken from my writings,—and the very liberal and handsome manner with which you have opened this controversy, in accompanying your *public* Address with a *private* letter, in which you have assured me of your best wishes for my success in my ministerial labours;—such generous conduct in an oponent, differing so widely as it doth from what I have been accustomed to receive from anonymous Barristers and anti-christian Reviewers, overwhelms me with kindness.

Moreover, Sir, it hath been told me of the high respectability of your character in private life; and how much you have laboured, and are still labouring, in public concerns and parochial offices, to meliorate the condition of the poor. Too well I know the value of such services, and too highly how to prize the blessings of such public-minded men in every neighbourhood, where the Lord in his providence hath placed them, not to be always forward upon every occasion to acknowledge their worth in society; and, especially in times like the present, when "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

But, with all these impressions upon my mind, I must not, indeed I dare not, suffer myself to be led away,—

no, not for a moment, from the consideration of the main object of our dispute. Much as I venerate your character, I cannot approve of your sentiments upon the subject of the London Female Penitentiary. Forgive me if I say, your views of it have not been taken fairly. You have looked at it through an inverted mirror; and hence your conclusions are erroneous. When you send forth, therefore, an Address to the Public, to tell them that it hath a *dangerous tendency*, unsubstantiated as the charge is with any evidence whatever, but the evidence of your own conjecture,—with these ill-founded decisions I must contend; and, although to your person I will shew the highest possible respect, to your errors I can manifest no favour;—but, while your arm is lifted up to level the Penitentiary to the ground, my exertions shall be called forth to render the blow nerveless!—And yet, more especially, will I look up and beseech the Lord to convert the anger causeless into blessings! Perhaps, some future day your sentiments may change. Perhaps, Sir, in a cooler hour, when looking at the Penitentiary through the right perspective, it may appear to your view what in reality it is; and the highly-to-be-desired name of Mr. Hale may be enrolled in the list of the friends to the institution!—but, until then, it will be my province to prove, and I hope to the conviction of the public mind, whom you have addressed upon this subject, that in no one point of view can it merit the opprobrium which you have thrown upon it, that it is of *dangerous tendency*.

Before I enter upon the examination of your Address, I would beg permission to correct a small mistake into which you have inadvertently fallen respecting the design of those writings of mine, which you have taken quotations from, in the magazine;* they were never written, as you have supposed, with a view to recom-

* Since printed in the Cottage Library Tracts, No. lxxxv. price 1d.

mend the *London* Penitentiary, but the *Plymouth*. They are indeed parts of a tract concerning an asylum then forming, and since established, in my own neighbourhood. This asylum is upon the same plan and principles as the London Penitentiary, but wholly unconnected with it.

The circumstances which gave birth to this tract, is an history founded on fact, which took place one summer's morning in the last year. The mother of a poor child, seduced from her home, and who had been long lost to her, had made a fruitless search to discover where she lay concealed; but it was on the morning only upon when she called at my door that she had found out her haunt of wretchedness. In the first paroxysms of her joy, she came to me; and I accompanied her, (as is stated in the little writing,) to the house of ill-fame, and brought back the wanderer. This, Sir, was the occasion of that publication; and not as you conjectured, by way of recommending the Pentonville Penitentiary.

It will not be unpleasant, I am persuaded, to a man of your feelings, notwithstanding your prejudices against Penitentiaries, to be told the sequel of that history. It could not be recorded then, because the subsequent event had not taken place; but ought to be subjoined now. The daughter, recovered by grace to a state of penitence and reform, is now living with her mother, and maintaining herself by her labours, in honest virtuous poverty.

Having just glanced at this little inaccuracy of your's respecting my writings, I now hasten to the examination of the more immediate object which I have in view, in answer to your Address.

I perceive, Sir, that you ground the force of your objections to the London Female Penitentiary, upon *three* general propositions; and, upon which, you rest the whole of your *postulatum*. The first is, that, ac-

cording to your views of it, 'it will ultimately disappoint the expectations of its supporters;'—the second is, 'that the result of its operations will never lessen, but increase, the sum of prostitution;'—and the third is, 'that it cannot be supported, by precept or example, from the word of God.'

Now, Sir, if either of these propositions of your's could be proved, (much more if all the three collectively taken, could be proved,) without doubt your objections to the Penitentiary would be altogether unanswerable, and the question against the institution would at once be decided.

But, unfortunately for your side of the argument, the two first of them must be referred, even from your own statement, to the decision of a future day, if that day should ever arrive, to determine the point in your favour; for I need not, I hope, point out to a man of your good sense and discernment, that, resting your objections to the Penitentiary, upon the presumption, (as you do your first proposition,) that 'it will ultimately disappoint the expectations of its supporters,' there must be time allowed for making the experiment; and, consequently, your present judgment is premature. Thus your *first* proposition falls at once to the ground; and a similar fate will attach itself to the *second;*—for if, as you say, the result of the operations of the Penitentiary be not to *lessen* but *increase* the sum of prostitution, surely, you must allow that here again, as in the former instance, the matter cannot be determined in your favour now. You will not venture to suppose the public will give you credit for being endued with a spirit of prophecy on the occasion; and, if not, what remains to be proved can only, for the present, be considered as an hypothesis. Hence, Sir, *two* of your *three* propositions, even upon your own statement of them, are fairly laid aside;—and, for the *third,* namely, 'that the principles of the Penitentiary cannot be sup-

ported, by precept or example, from the word of God,' I shall, I hope, fully prove, before I take my leave of you, that this is an assertion unfounded in facts; but, on the contrary, the principles of such an institution, for the recovery of miserable sinners from sin to salvation, are decidedly supported by both.

Though what I have already observed, in answer to your two first propositions, as far as they go, is final, yet, upon the very bare possibility of the thing itself, that future experience might, in any instance justify your reasoning, I would gladly follow you over the ground of controversy upon these subjects, if haply you had yourself followed up your own propositions with any argument, or even the shape of an argument whatever, for me to pursue;—but, be not offended, Sir, when I say that, though you have indeed laid down these several propositions as though you wished them to be received for so many matters of fact, yet not a single reason or evidence have you brought forward in their support. You produce them, and then, like the ostrich in the wilderness, leave the egg for incubation to chance.

I have examined, again and again, through all the intermediate pages of your Address, from the first mention of your propositions, (page 3,) to the *supposed* close of the first of them, (page 18,) and cannot find the smallest vestige of an argument in justification of it, either by direct testimony, or by indirect inference.

In proof of what I say, I refer to the Address itself. Your third page contains these propositions; your fourth is a total departure from the subject, in telling the public, that 'it was your wish to have carried on this controversy through the medium of the same magazine where you read my writings.' The fifth page contains 'quotations from those writings;' the 6th and 7th, in opposing to them the duties of parish-officers; and, from the 13th to the 18th, you are engaged in 'giving

the public the outlines of the plan of the Penitentiary.'

Now, whatever connexion these subjects may have with the general account of Penitentiaries, certainly they are irrelvant to the particular doctrine you assert in your propositions. Your object to prove should have been, that the Penitentiary 'would ultimately disappoint the expectations of its supporters;'—but, in the confirmation of this singular opinion of your's you literally say nothing.

But, Sir, I scorn to take the smallest advantage of this oversight of your's. I might, indeed, upon your own ground, have taken occasion to observe that, as you state, the Penitentiary 'must disappoint the expectations of its friends;' and that it will *increase* the evil rather than *diminish* it; I might still beg that a fair trial should be given to it,—and I might earnestly request a man of Mr. Hale's generosity to withhold declaring himself such an open enemy, as positively to assert it hath *a dangerous tendency*, when the very evils he supposes will result from its establishment, he himself can only *presumptuously suppose*, and not *positively affirm*, may follow. This would have been meeting you, Sir, on fair ground;—but I pass by all these advantages which you have given me on the subject. In following your steps, it behoved me to mark these wanderings; and that is all the use I shall make of them;—but since you have not brought forward a single argument to prove your own propositions, I hope you will not be offended if I bring forward many to justify the presumption, at least, that the event will prove the reverse. You say (but leave it to others to shew how) that 'the London Female Penitentiary will ultimately disappoint the expectations of its supporters.' I say (but shall go on myself to substantiate what I say by well-founded hopes) that, under the Lord's blessing, it will fully answer them; and, that I

may bring the point to as speedy an issue as possible, I would refer for judgment to the decision of common sense.

Let it be supposed, for the sake of argument, that the nation at large could be engaged in an endeavour to rescue the unhappy characters we have in view, from the misery and sin in which they are involved ;—that (what all the world must agree in to be most devoutly wished) an Asylum or House of Mercy could be thrown open, large enough to take into its bosom the troops of females who infest our streets, and corrupt our youth ; and with an eye to their reform, a plan could be adopted to bring them back to the path of virtue and religion, the question instantly occurs, what should particularly be attended to in the accomplishment of these purposes, in the plan of government to be observed in such a family ?

I think this is a fair statement of the subject ; and, I humbly apprehend that, in answer to the question, there can be but one sentiment upon it. All parties must concur here, that whatever is best calculated to induce a train of conscientious conduct in these two branches of religious and moral obligation,—our duty towards God, and our duty towards man ;—that these should eminently form the grand and leading principles of such an institution.

Such then, Sir, I contend, in a very conspicuous degree form the prominent features of the London Female Penitentiary ; and, if the governors of it act up to their own plan (which common charity compels us to hope they will), and if a gracious God should condescend to bless their endeavours (which every principle of faith leads us to hope), it is impossible that 'the supporters of it can ultimately be disappointed of their expectation ;' but, on the contrary, abundant success must crown their labours.

Allow me, Sir, to bring before you an account of

what I myself know concerning the internal government of this family; and when I have stated the general principles by which the household is regulated in their daily occupation, I shall request Mr. Hale himself to judge respecting the eventual success of an institution, on which side, his or mine, is the best of the argument.

When I visited the Pentonville Penitentiary, I found the family, (consisting at that time of *forty-four* women,) all engaged, like the several members of the bee-hive, in various occupations. Indeed, this is among the first objects attended to upon the introduction of these poor women into the asylum,—that they should be immediately brought into habits of industry. Hence, if their health will permit, the very day of their admission commenceth the day of their employment; and, in order to make it a cheerful service, it is the object of the matron's first concern to discover, if possible, the particular bias or frame of mind of each penitent;—how they had been engaged before the period of their seduction;—what education and trainment they have had; and to what now their several abilities might most advantageously be directed. By these means, while the Penitentiary at Pentonville, can boast itself as a house of industry, equal to any, suited to its abilities, it is a society of cheerfulness in labour, which bids fair to ensure the love of employment.

The several engagements of this little community correspond to the powers and capacities of its members. They spin, make all their own shoes and stockings, and sell what is over and above the consumption in the family. They make child-bed-linen, gloves, and various fancy dresses, which the visitors of the Penitentiary purchase, by way of giving encouragement to their industry; and the product of their labours is become already so considerable, that the committee are looking forward to it, as hereafter forming no small fund in aid

to the general purposes of the charity, when the institution shall have passed the time of its non-age, and is ripened into a greater maturity.

It is a pleasing part also in the history of their industry, to observe that, by way of holding forth every encouragement to the penitents, a *sixth part* of the profit from their work is given to them;—and this method hath a double view, by way of aiding a plan of reform; for, by this means, some provision is made against the period of their departure from the Penitentiary, to help them in their future path of life. Neither is it a small incentive to a mind where there is a laudable pride of doing well, to contribute to their own prospects. It cannot fail of giving a favourable impression of the good effects likely to result from this plan of government, when I add, that the penitents, from those earnings, have opened a fund of themselves for charitable purposes, from whence they give to any cases of distress with which they are made acquainted. Having themselves felt the blessedness of mercy, they know what it is to shew mercy.

Such then are the general outlines in the plan of government observed in this asylum, in one branch of the duty, in relation to society. Even the intervals of work are not misspent. Some of the women who have been better taught than others, in reading, writing, and arithmetic, kindly act as teachers in those departments to the uninformed; and those who are expert in any art or trade, do the same by instructing others; and hence, not only is the whole family always engaged in somewhat that is useful or entertaining, but a method is hereby insensibly, as it were, imbibed, which, in the after-stages of life, may open a source of maintenance and support.

I cannot but conclude, Sir, from this plain statement of facts, that the plan of the Female Penitentiary in this department of it, by way of inducing a spirit of

industry among the several branches of its household, is admirably calculated to do good; neither can I suppose that it is likely 'to disappoint the expectations of its supporters:' and I am convinced, Sir, that, with all your prejudices, were you to see the different articles produced for sale, from the united labours of those poor women, you would be constrained to allow that they are an active family. The house at Pentonville, though not a parish workhouse, is a house of industry.

Though coercive measures are not made use of within the walls of the Penitentiary, as perhaps they may within the precincts of some of our parochial houses of correction,—yet do not suppose from hence, that it is a house without discipline. No well-regulated family, indeed, could subsist without order; and the Pentonville hath her order and laws;—a departure from which, if not punished with stripes, yet is followed with exercises painful and mortifying; and should repeated transgressions be found in any one of the family, no doubt, it would occasion exclusion.

I hope, indeed, that this law hath never found cause to be enforced. The *seventy times seventh* offence with me, I confess, should take place, before that I could consent to throw out again into the gulph, from whence she had emerged, a poor miserable creature, and thereby relinquish all hopes of any future recovery. Nay, were I at the door in the moment of the departure of such a one, I should plead hard for further forbearance; and, before "the master of the house had risen and shut to the door," methinks I should say, yet, once more, let "a little space be given for repentance;' and as the master of the house hath done by me, so would I do by her. I should bring back the trembling sinner, fancying I heard his gracious voice, saying, "destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

While I contemplate in my view the Female Penitentiary at Pentonville, in those well-known characters

of industry which are daily found there, and look forward with the most pleasing hopes, that, under God, they must effect a change of life and manners among a set of poor creatures, gathered from the greatest mass of idleness, disease, infamy, and wretchedness, I really cannot sufficiently express my surprise that objections should be so hastily taken up against such an institution; and I am still more at a loss to conceive what reasoning can appear so very specious in a mind so well informed as your's, as to call forth that very high displeasure which you have shewn in your Address to the Public against the Penitentiary. Will Mr. Hale, will any man, with these plain and palpable truths before him, and which I know from personal testimony to be real matters of fact, venture to denominate such a charity to have *a dangerous tendency?* Nay, more,—can a man of approved benevolence and liberality tell the public, that he thinks it necessary to caution them against depending too much upon the profession of these unfortunate women, who, having passed a suitable period of probation in the Penitentiary, are recommended by its patrons to places of respectability? Do you really wish, Sir, that these poor creatures should be for ever shut out of all orderly society, and never enter a religious and moral family again? Are their characters always to be questionable? And is it needful to doubt their certificates of good behaviour, because, in obtaining them, they have passed through a Penitentiary rather than a workhouse? Do you suppose that the public would be better pleased, that they should bring testimonials of reform from parish officers, rather than from the governors of a Penitentiary?

I leave these questions with you; and now beg your attention to another branch of the subject.

Hitherto, I have been considering the government of the Pentonville Penitentiary, under that part of it which concerns the duty due to society. I would now call

upon you to look at it in that other and higher department of it,—the duty due to GOD; and this, indeed, is among the distinguishing characters of the London Female Penitentiary.

It is not enough, in the scheme of that charity, which you think so deserving reproach, and which I think so highly meriting commendation and support, to aim at lessening, if possible, the number of women of the town, and to render them honourable and useful in society;—the Pentonville Penitentiary hath far nobler objects in view:—to make these wretched outcasts no longer outcasts; and to restore them to their friends and to their families. These objects, if there were no other ends to be attained, would be sufficient evidences of its utility: but it is to the recovery of immortal souls unto Christ;—it is to save sinners from hell and destruction, and to bring them to the enjoyment of the rich, free, and sovereign salvation by Jesus,—to which the Penitentiary at Pentonville directs her chief attention.

Hence she calls forth every effort, and employs every energy which can be brought forward in exercise, to the attainment of this immense blessing. Ordinances and the several means of grace are regularly observed;—public services of worship, and private exhortations, in the intervals of duty, are adopted as instruments, in the divine hand, to make the inhabitants of the Penitentiary "wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus;"—the holy scriptures, in portions of them, are daily read;—hymns are constantly sung;—and, beside the Lord's day, which is wholly set apart for divine worship, and in both parts of which the family have the regular and stated service of a minister, there are lectures sometimes, and I believe not unfrequently in the week, for explaining the word of God; and the matron, Mrs. Stibbs, (to her praise be it spoken, though her feelings will be hurt in the commendation,) hath

adopted a most admirable method in seconding the minister's instruction. She causeth the several members of her charge to make their own observations, in writing of what is delivered to them from time to time in the ordinances of worship, and thus to make the progress of their improvement under a stated ministry of the word.

I think, Sir, that it may be gratifying to you to read somewhat of this kind. I, therefore, take the freedom of inserting the morning meditation of one of the penitents, which I myself copied from the original, in my visit to the Penitentiary. I found the book on the table in their work-room, which the women had just left, to make vacant for the entrance of myself and friends who accompanied me to the house. I confess, upon the perusal, the sentiments struck me so forcibly, and as coming from such a writer, and in such a school, that I could not resist the importunity of copying them in my pocket-book. They were *verbatim* as follows:

"*Nov.* 21*st.*

"I feel my soul exceedingly sad when I reflect on the strong resentment I yet feel against those who have bitterly injured me; and that in spite of my resolves, the least circumstance which occurs unpleasant to me, rouses my ill-suppressed anger; and, in my heart, I sometimes curse the author of my wretchedness.

"How dare I then presumptuously suppose my heart softened, and more alive to those blessed truths I hear, when I, who stand so much in need of forgiveness from a Being of infinite perfection, against whom I have sinned with impunity, feel a reluctance to pardon a fellow-creature, whose offences against me are venial, compared with mine towards God!"

Now, Sir, I venture to conclude, and Mr. Hale must join issue with me in the conclusion, for there can be

but one opinion upon the subject, that the writer of such sentiments as these, notwithstanding the lapse which passion had induced, aided by temptations, perhaps, that we know nothing of, was above the common horde of street-walkers; and I venture still further to conclude, that Mr. Hale himself will suppose, that her mind was too susceptible of feeling to go to a parish officer for admission into a workhouse;—and do allow me then to ask, is not a Penitentiary peculiarly adapted for such characters? And do you not believe, Sir, that among the great mass of *twenty thousand females*, which it is said infest the streets by night, for the purposes of seduction, that there are many equally capable of thinking?—many whose feelings and whose conduct equally correspond? Indeed, Sir, I cannot think with you, that because a woman of this kind hath lost her chastity, she hath *ceased to blush!* and unless you could have proved it, I think you have no right to call the subject ludicrous, when it is supposed many have feelings too acute to seek a parochial refuge from a way of life like the women of the town. Your Address would not, in my esteem, have suffered any thing injurious to the delicacy of your own feelings, had you totally suppressed the whole of the ninth page on this subject.

From these united views of the Pentonville Penitentiary, in the two great branches of its attention, in aiming to recover the wretched objects of its charity,—to the conscientious discharge of their duty towards God and towards men, I think that I may be now indulged with making my appeal, as you have before done, to the candour of the unprejudiced public. I would now humbly enquire, whether the method which is adopted, is not the most promising and likely to accomplish the desirable ends of the institution? No doubt, the wisest and the best plan the wisdom of men can devise, must prove abortive, unless commissioned and blest by di-

vine grace: but as means in the Lord's hand, I do conceive nothing can open with more conspicuous hopes than the Pentonville Penitentiary.

If, Sir, the prospect be encouraging, upon what ground is it that you come forward to assert, and all the while unsubstantiated by a single argument in proof, that 'it must ultimately disappoint the expectations of its supporters?' Hath disappointment followed the expectations of the other well-known and long established institutions of a similar nature? Hath the Lock hospital or the Magdalene asylum failed in all instances? And, if not, wherefore should the Pentonville? Are wiser or better methods pursued by those noble charities? It would be invidious to make comparisons; neither shall I. Indeed, they have all their *quantum* of separate and distinct merit; and as such, all put in their modest and unassuming claim for general patronage: but your offence seems to be *special* to the London Female Penitentiary; and I only wish that I could prevail upon you to visit it in person: I venture to believe that it would be wholly done away. Could you but be present at their labours, or, what is the same thing, to examine the product of those labours,—could you have but a just idea of their cheerfulness in their laws of industry, their order, and regularity,—could you see them at their devotions, hear their hymns, listen to the fervour of their prayers, surely, Sir, your prejudice would remove:—it is not, indeed it is not the effect of imagination, but a well-attested reality. Many of these poor creatures give testimony to a change of heart as well as a change of conduct in their deportment. Many a tear falls from those eyes, which before were full of lasciviousness and uncleanness; and many a hallelujah now drops from the lips in praises to God and the Lamb, which, but a short space since, were used in profaneness. Believe me, Sir, I should feel much concern, had I come forward as you have done, under such circumstances, to

assert, that such an Institution 'must ultimately disappoint the expectations of his supporters—that the result of its operations will never *lessen* but *increase* the sum of prostitution—that it is of *a dangerous tendency*—and that you think it necessary to caution the public against depending too much upon the profession of those unfortunate women, who, having passed a suitable period of probation in the Penitentiary, are recommended by its patrons to places of respectability.' So much, Sir, in answer to the *first* of your propositions.

In following you to the review of the *second* of them, I have to lament, as in the former instance, your total departure from any discussion of the point proposed. You say, that the result of the operations of a Penitentiary 'will never *lessen*, but *increase the sum of prostitution!*'—but though you have thrown out the assertion, you have left it wholly unsupported with a single evidence. You add, indeed, that among the provocatives to sin, that it becomes no small encouragement to women of the town to know that 'when they have indulged themselves as long as they please, they can at any time get a prompt admission into the London Penitentiary.' An argument, if I apprehend right, similar to that of a man's being regardless of breaking a limb, because there are so many public hospitals, where the fracture may be reduced!

Pardon me, Sir, if I venture to observe, that the displeasure you have taken at the Penitentiary, appears to have arisen altogether from a misconception of its principles. It is a *Penitentiary*, Sir; and the very first idea of a Penitentiary, implies, that the objects admitted into it are supposed to be under certain feelings of distress of mind, from the consciousness of past misconduct: whereas you take for granted, that all who apply for admission are prompted to it only by poverty; but this is the grossest mistake that can be.

It may be, and indeed it is admitted, that numbers will apply, whose leading principle is poverty; but there are, in the great mass of these wretched branches of our fallen nature, no small proportion, whose supplicating eye, to be partakers of the blessings of an Asylum like the London Penitentiary, is not directed for a mere relief from the wants of the body, but from a desire to be delivered from the sorrows of the soul.

Since I sat down to write this letter to you, I have been called upon to visit a poor broken-hearted female of this description:—not that she needed money, neither stood in want for the supply of the body; but she wanted to return to the nurturing nest of a fond mother, from whose cherishing wings she had been decoyed by the syren song of one that lay in wait to deceive; and, at the age of *seventeen*, fell into the net of the spoiler! Should I have said, when sent for to such an interesting case of misery, let her go to the parish officer?—and if he will not do his duty, let her apply to the magistrate?* Sir, she needed neither the parish officer nor the magistrate!—and yet, upon your principles, this would have been the mode I ought to have adopted; but, without libelling either the officer or the magistrate (which you seem to think must be attached to any neglect or application of this kind) I did that which common humanity dictated. Her parents' house was but within five miles of my own; and, through the help of a kind friend, who is always alive to offices of philanthropy, the business was not suffered to rest, until the poor fugitive was safely lodged under the tender covering she had fled from.

Indeed, so far is poverty from being the universal motive in prompting these miserable creatures to seek a shelter from their calamity, that I venture to believe it is not so very common a cause as is supposed. It is

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* See Page 8 of your Address.

but a few *weeks* past that one applied to be taken into the Plymouth Asylum, for no motive whatever but to get free from the horrible way of life, as she herself termed it, into which she had fallen. 'I do not want money,' said the poor young creature to a lady of the committee, to whom she applied, 'for I have six pounds in my pocket, and need no clothes; but I want to be delivered from a life of such misery.' It is but a few *days* only, since another, from similar motives, and with money in her pocket, came from Portsmouth, having heard of the Plymouth Asylum, praying to be taken into it.

And these cases are not singular. I find, in one of the annual accounts of the Bristol Penitentiary, a similar statement. 'Though distress (it is said) in the first instance, has been generally found the motive of application made for admission, yet it is far from having been the universal and exclusive inducement. Several have been received,* who appeared to be impelled by the mere horrors of their consciences, without any extrinsical circumstances of bodily trouble; and, in more than one instance, the clamours of conscience were so loud, as to have occasioned the last dictate of despair —a resolution of suicide, if the application failed of success!' And the address adds, 'It may not be improper to observe, that in many instances, the committee have found some alleviation of the criminality of the objects of this charity, in the deplorable ignorance of every thing moral and divine which enveloped their minds. One of them, who has been taught to read her bible since her admission to the Penitentiary, and who seems to take great delight in all the means of instruction, declares that, previous to her introduction to her present situation, she did not even know

* This was but nine months from its institution, and when twelve women only had been admitted.

that she had a soul to be saved!—and another recollects but two seasons of public worship she ever attended; and these occurred just before her admission, when, intent on her own destruction, she crept, under cover of the evening, into the corner of a church, and listened to the voice of religious truth, which diverted her from her dreadful resolution.'*

From such statements, it should seem but the fair and obvious conclusion of things, that, if the entrance into a Penitentiary be not always for the purpose of maintenance, but very frequently from higher motives of real distress of soul and the anguish of a broken heart; a departure from it, and especially where sound principles of religion and morality are inculcated, are not likely to induce the sad consequences you mention, —'to *increase* rather than *lessen* the sum of prostitution.'

But from mere reasoning and argument, let an appeal be made to plain matters of fact. The question is, what hath been, or now is, the result of the experiment already made from the several Penitentiaries of the kingdom?

I cannot, indeed, speak with precision in many instances, concerning any of them from personal knowledge; but from the relation given in the annual statement of the Bristol Penitentiary, as well as from the records of the London Female Penitentiary, it must be allowed that most decided evidences have been produced in their favour;—but the Plymouth Asylum (and which is formed upon the precise model of the London Penitentiary) it is my province to bear an active part in the weekly government of it; and of this Institution I can speak decidedly. I have been watching over every part of it with the most attentive eye; and of the salutary effects of it, I can and do bear an

* See Bristol Penitentiary, Address for 1802.

unreserved testimony, that it carries with it every appearance of good. Nay, Sir, I would add, that, as far as a poor short-sighted mortal can discern divine tokens of favour, I do from my very heart and soul believe, that the blessing of God hath been and is still upon it. In the few instances of those poor women, who have passed through the house, traces of a saving change by grace hath been seen upon several of them.

Early in the past year, this charity opened. From the period of its Institution to the present hour, twenty-three of these outcasts of society have been received into it. Of that number, two are already gone into service, having, for some time, given proofs of exemplary behaviour. The families who received them are known to be pious families; and the heads of those families were well acquainted with the character of these poor creatures whom they received in among them; and I have the pleasure to add, that every report concerning their conduct, since their departure from the Asylum, tends more and more to confirm the hope that a thorough change of mind and manners hath taken place upon them. One died in the Asylum; concerning whom there was the highest reason to believe that her end was in peace. One is returned to her friends, with whom a happy reconciliation had been effected previous to her leaving the Asylum;*—and of those that now remain in the house, from the matron's report it appears, that several are under truly serious impressions.

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* I cannot forbear to add, by way of collateral testimony, the peculiarly pleasing circumstances which attended the return of this young woman to her parents. In a letter, addressed to one of the committee, immediately upon her arrival at her father's house, both the parents expressed themselves in this interesting manner:—'Our dear child is returned safe. Our meeting together was mutually affecting. The attention you have paid, and the trouble you have taken in behalf of our dear child, we hope never to forget. We have received our dear daughter—our lost child! recovered from pollution, sin, and shame! The Lord render a reward to you, dear Sir, and all those who have been instrumental in doing her good!' &c. &c.

Now, Sir, from this unvarnished account of the Plymouth Asylum, I would ask any man of candour, whether there is not the highest probability to augur good? and if we may be allowed to reason by analogy, whether there can be any well-founded argument assigned wherefore the several similar institutions of the kingdom may not be supposed to furnish numberless instances in corroboration of the same utility? I cannot indeed, Sir, see by what plan of reasoning it is that you have satisfied your mind, that you consider yourself at liberty to form such decided conclusions, that 'the ultimate issue of the Penitentiary must be to disappoint the expectations of its supporters!' and that 'the result of its operations will never lessen but increase the sum of prostitution!' Much less when you add, that 'if the plan of the London Female Penitentiary be preserved in, hundreds will have to lament the day that the sound of its name ever reached their ears.'* Forgive my fears, if I invert this phrase of your's, and say, if, by your ill-judged attack upon this noble Institution, the minds of any should be prejudiced to withhold from it the support which otherwise would have been granted it, and by which the limits of usefulness to the charity are circumscribed, the lamentation will be with you, in having so unprovokedly stepped forth to the preventing many from receiving the blessings of it.

Having finished my review of your *two* former propositions, I now hasten to the consideration of the *third;* in which you assert, with the same confidence as in the former, that 'the principles of the London Female Penitentiary cannot be supported by precept or example, in the word of God.'

To be sure, it is somewhat singular that a committee, formed for the government of this charity, and many

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* Page 41, Address.

of them (as I apprehend) ministers of the gospel, should be so far ignorant of the bible, as to be unconscious that the principles of the Institution they foster have no authority, either from precept or example, in the word of God! It would be a sad charge this, if true, and to be brought forward too by a layman!—but, Sir, after observing the other parts of your Address, there is nothing that astonisheth me in this assertion of your's:—I am only at a loss to conceive how you read your bible!

If there be a single point in the rays of divine truth more luminous one than another, surely it is that which shines with lustre in manifesting forth God's glory, in the numberless ways and means which the Lord hath owned and blessed, in promoting the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ. Here all converge as in one focus!—here all meet as in one centre! Any man, and every man, who hath himself partaken of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, finds in himself a living precept, an irresistible precept, (if I may call it so) by which he is constrained to communicate to others the information he himself hath received, of the glad tidings and the joyful sound. Such a one cannot withhold giving his testimony whenever the opportunity favours, to the truth as it is in Jesus. His language is like one of old, "Come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul!"

The gospel, therefore, may be considered as an universal precept to this one end; and so much the reverse is it of what you say, 'that an Institution like the Penitentiary finds no authority for its principles from any precept in the word of God,' that it may be found in every and through every part of it. It is not the province of ministers only, neither is it confined to the mere office of preaching. Various are the ways and methods by which, as instruments in the divine hand, the

Lord is pleased to carry on and diffuse the knowledge of his truth. Multitudes of believers, among laymen, have been found, in all ages, who have considered the word of God as containing precepts to this diligence; and, accordingly, have been earnest in their obedience to them. Hence, pious institutions, colleges, and schools have been formed. Some have directed their attention to write religious tracts; and others in dispersing them; and, in short, in every way by which their several abilities and powers might be best called forth to promote the divine glory, in the accomplishment of such beneficent purposes to the souls of men; and hence, the gospel itself, as indeed it is represented by the beautiful similitude of its Almighty Author, is as a rich, generous, and plentiful supper, where the several servants, who themselves have tasted the Master's bounty, delight to go out under the Master's eye, and invite in, from the highways, and lanes, and hedges of the city, "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."

So that, in every charitable institution which hath for its first and leading object the glory of God, in the salvation of sinners, this may be considered as one of the many means the Lord is pleased to raise up, constitute, and appoint, for proclaiming the messages of his grace;—and the whole code of divine precepts may be brought forward, if needful, in justification of the authority. Hence, Sir, I venture to set it down as a maxim perfectly incontrovertible, that, if the great truths of God are held forth, and taught, and recommended in the London Female Penitentiary (as I have already shewn they are) these truths carry with them the divine precept for its institution, and very loudly proclaim the divine authority by which the governors of it act;—and, as a means of grace in the hand of God (and no human institution can lay claim to more) the precept of God's word will be found as full and

obligatory to the forming a chapel for his sacred worship in the Pentonville Penitentiary, as in the forming the chapel of any parish or workhouse whatever; and the divine blessing may as humbly be looked for, by faith and prayer upon it, as upon any other;—and, allow me to add, Sir, *that* precept carries with it the truest marks of being best understood and best observed, where we find the Lord's blessing accompanying it;—and *that* institution is best founded, which rests upon the chief Corner Stone Jehovah hath laid in Zion.

So much for the *precept;* now for the *example.* You say, that 'the institution of the London Female Penitentiary cannot be supported by precept or example, in the word of God.' But, I say, that the founders of it need only turn to the word of God to find *a cloud of witnesses* for the full confirmation of both.

Allow me, Sir, to ask, did Jesus, the divine Samaritan, represent himself as relieving the half dead traveller, bring him to his church the inn, supply all the needful balm to his case and circumstances, and bid the man that was at a loss, or pretended so to be, to know his duty upon a like occasion, did Jesus *bid* him *go and do likewise*—and shall not you and I, say will not every man, in this lovely representation, where both *precept* and *example* are indeed blended, discover sufficient authority to found an institution like the Penitentiary where poor perishing sinners may be brought, and where the balm of the gospel to their wounded and more than half-dead souls may be administered? Put the case that Jesus looked on:—the Female Penitentiary is opening? What is the object of it? To take in poor miserable outcasts, pining away in sin and wretchedness, and to bring them to the knowledge of salvation by Jesus! Would the Redeemer say as you have done, 'There is no precept nor example for such an institution in the word of God?' Would Jesus forbid the several asylums of our national honour which are

formed for his worship, which raise their venerable heads in various parts of the metropolis? And if not, wherefore the London Female Penitentiary? Why hath this fallen so much under your displeasure?*

You say, that 'the case of the woman taken in adultery, is the only one in point which the advocates of the Female Penitentiary bring forward to justify the propriety of their institution.' But, for my own part, though an equally warm friend with the warmest

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* You will pardon me, I hope, Sir, if in a short note, I venture to make a remark upon the general observation you have thrown out, in the opening of your Address upon *British benevolence*, as manifested in the many charities of the kingdom. You seem to enter into a proper appreciation of them, and very justly observe, that 'they are noble instances of charitable munificence.' 'Considering however, (you add) the critical situation of the country, and the many privations we may be called to endure, it becomes a matter of the first importance, that the liberality of the public should not be directed to any channel that will, in the smallest degree, run counter to the suppression of vice, and thus ultimately defeat the primary object of doing good to our fellow-creatures.'—See Address, page 1.

I was delighted with this exordium; and a subject instantly struck my mind, that an opportunity had lately offered before the public, where the doctrine might have been most justly applied. The ashes of Covent Garden Theatre were not removed, nay, I believe the fire itself was hardly extinguished, before that subscriptions, to a greater amount than (as I have been told) was absolutely needed, were opened and soon filled, for building a new play-house, upon a more capacious and splendid plan than the former.

Now, Sir, if *christian benevolence* was the only spirit in prompting to the liberalities of the kingdom, one might have expected, indeed, that so awful a providence, and involving in its consequences as it did, the death of so many persons who lost their lives in the ruins, would have brought forward a generous subscription; but not, indeed, to rebuild a theatre for stage-amusements, in a moment in which, as you say, *the country is so critical*—but to have erected a pillar like the one on Fish Street Hill, to perpetuate divine mercy in a deliverance from greater evils in such a visitation!

How is it then, Sir, allow me to ask (and to use your own words) that, 'considering the critical situation of the country, and the many privations we may be called to endure,' you did not come forward and say as you have now said, 'it becomes a matter of the first importance, that the liberality of the public should not be directed to any channel that will, in the smallest degree, run counter to the suppression of vice!'

Here was a moment for a man of Mr. Hale's christian benevolence to have found scope for exercise! Here was a subject to have exercised such a pen as his, in shewing, that, 'considering the critical situation of the country, and the many privations we may be called to endure,' it were a pity to appropriate the public liberality to such a purpose!—but it is the Female Penitentiary, against the support of which Mr. Hale would guard the public purse! In his view, perhaps, the play-house doth not 'run so counter to the suppression of vice.'

advocates for the institution, I lay no stress upon it at all. I make a nice distinction when speaking of laying a stress upon precedents between what hath a reference to the subject, and what hath none at all. I presume that by far the greater part of women of the town are *unmarried* persons. Hence the woman taken in adultery, and the illicit commerce of the sexes, form a perfectly distinct subject.*

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* It is with much concern that I have read your observations upon this most interesting passage, in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, so foreign to the grand and momentous doctrine it holds forth. If I apprehend your meaning, your views of it go no further than that Jesus, in all this transaction, only endeavoured to disentangle himself from a perplexing question, that he might neither offend the Roman power, nor the law of the Sandhedrim; and that, to accomplish this end, the Son of God waited the departure of the woman's accusers; and when he found there was not *one* witness left when the law required *two*, he might dismiss the culprit for want of legal evidence.

Is it possible, Sir, that you can read this history with such an apathy to the blessed doctrine of grace contained in it, as to accept of such an interpretation? What! did the Son of God, the *faithful and true witness*, really need to have recourse to such a miserable expedient as this, to avoid being entrapped in his discourse by his enemies? And was this the sole object of his holy mind, through the whole of this transaction? Pardon me, Sir; but had this been all that Christ intended from it, nothing can be more evident than that the Lord Jesus had a much easier method of evading giving decision upon the question. In this case there needed no address from Jesus to the woman; neither had Christ any necessity to wait the departure of the scribes and pharisees; for, as the woman was taken in *adultery*, in the very act, of consequence the man, who was partner with her in guilt, must have been taken also, and ought to have been partaker in the punishment. Hence, therefore, he, in whom are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," could not be at a loss to get rid of every difficulty, if he wished to avoid giving sentence, by referring the decision until the other offender was also brought before him. You will be pleased to observe, that I am taking up the subject now upon your own ground; and even here shewing that the Son of God could not be driven to so pitiful an expedient as the sense you have given the passage must imply.

Neither, let me add further, have you any *scriptural* authority to found what you have said concerning this passage, on reference to the Jewish polity, or the Jewish doctors of that age. The passage you refer to in Matt. xii. 39. our Lord plainly intended for the general feature of the Jewish nation in that day; and the reference you make to Num. v. 12—31. is irrelevant to this subject. The woman was taken in *adultery*, notoriously so; for she was taken in the very act. The case in Numbers made provision for what was secret, and where there were no witnesses. You should have referred, Sir, to the case in point: Lev. xx. 10. and Deut. xxii. 22.

But doth Mr. Hale really believe that the determination of this point (and which the Lord Jesus after all left undetermined) was the principal point Christ had in view, and for which the evangelist John thought proper to record it? Really, Sir, I lament that a mind like your's should be content to be

But while I am very ready to give up to you all the strength of argument you can draw from hence, will you venture to believe, much less to assert, that this is the only one authorized by Christ himself, where his blessed *example* ought to operate in following his sacred steps? What think you of the case of Mary, in the house of Simon, the pharisee? Can you behold that poor sinner coming to this self-righteous man's house, and read what passed in that sweet interview between the several parties,—an holy Saviour, a polluted sinner, and a blind conceited pharisee, and yet question whether an institution like the London Female Penitentiary might not advantageously be opened, where, from the reading the scriptures of God, followed by affectionate exhortations from a minister, many a Magdalene might be brought, under grace, to a similar situation of true and genuine repentance? Do you not recollect the general tenor of the Redeemer's ministry when upon earth, and the galling reproof which he gave to the self-righteous pharisees, when he said, "publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you?"

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led away from the blessed view this most interesting passage affords, in displaying the rich, free, and sovereign grace of the Lord Jesus, and to accept of an account so enervated, and where the chief glory of the record is left out. Do you not believe, Sir, that Jesus meant truly and fully to pardon this sinner? Could the Son of God mean nothing more, when he said, "Neither do I condemn thee," than that, for want of two legal witnesses, he should not proceed to judgment? Was it the custom of Christ to raise expectations in the breasts of poor sinners, and then to disappoint them?—and would not this have been the case here, if, when he dismissed her with the gracious sentence, "Neither, do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," he meant nothing of pardon, nor the forgiveness of sins?

I know not, Sir, what commentators you have consulted upon the occasion; but while you say you have consulted the best, I say, 'If any commentator would teach me to think so disparagingly of the Son of God, I would commit his commentary to the flames.' Let me beg of you to read the whole chapter that follows. Compare it with the paralytic's pardon, in Mark ii. 1—13. then turn to the Magdalene's case, in Luke vii. 36. to end, and I venture to think, if the Holy Ghost be your teacher, that the whole taken together, will open to your view a rich and most illustrious display of the Godhead of Christ. who had power on earth to forgive sins, and who was, and is, and ever must be, the Judge of quick and dead. John v. 22, 23.

Will not these instances serve to prove that we have *example* as well as *precept* for authority in forming an institution upon the principles of the London Female Penitentiary?—and that Mr. Hale in this *third* proposition of his, as well as the *two* former, did not go upon sufficient ground to justify his assertion to the contrary?

Whether what hath been advanced in contradiction to your Address shall prove satisfactory, I leave the public, (to whom you have made appeal,) to judge. I only beg, before I take my leave of you, by way of *addenda* to the whole, to set you right concerning another part of your pamphlet.

When I asserted, in those writings of mine which you read in the magazine, that multitudes of poor women of the town are under the dreadful necessity of prosecuting that way of life for a maintenance, (and which sentiment you treated so contemptuously,) I beg now to inform you, that it was not taken up upon trust, as your unsupported assertions are,—but from long knowledge of the truth, and from long observation and acquaintance with the real fact as it is. Yes, Sir, I do assert, that this is literally true! Perhaps, your little acquaintance with this subject hath never led you to see those characters as they really are. The greater part of those unhappy women are living in houses, where, for the sake of shelter, to the owners of them they are under tribute. They are all, more or less, in debt to their hostess; and purposely kept so, that they may not leave them: and hence, what I said before I again maintain:—they are under the dreadful necessity of prosecuting their unhappy way of life, whatever their private wishes may be, for the shelter and maintenance they receive!

I do not throw out these observations from having *read* their history, nor from having been *informed* of it from others. My information is personal, long discovered, and continually confirmed by an accession of new

evidences. Two very recent cases have fallen under my knowledge, on my being called upon to visit them. One was a poor creature, supposed to be dying; and this miserable being was so far gone in debt to the landlady, that her clothes were all in her creditor's custody, to secure the money. The other added to her insolvency so much disease, that as she was no longer able to be hired out for bread, the unfeeling woman very earnestly hoped that she might be taken off her hands if she recovered.

Before you venture, Sir, to controvert these facts, I would wish you to get better acquainted with the history of these women. Sir, our horses in the most cruel stage-coaches of the kingdom, are better used than numbers of them are. If there were an Howard to visit brothels, as he visited hospitals, then we might have a real and circumstantial history of their state: but I have seen enough to know that the great mass of them are tributaries to those under whose roof they live; and I hesitate not again to repeat, that multitudes follow the sad life from what they consider to be necessity. It is said, 'that there is such a thing as honour among thieves;' and, it is possible, that there may be such a thing as a sense of honesty among women of the town: so that they will not leave the house where they are in debt until they are free. But whether this be so or not, certain it is, they seldom get out of the vortex into which they are once hurried, until death closeth their misery and life together. Perhaps, there may be, and no doubt there is, many other corresponding circumstances to induce this sad career to be continued. What from shame,—from the universal frown of the world,—the inability for the majority of them to help themselves,—the stern countenance they meet with from every body, not to employ them or take them into their houses, and many difficulties of a like nature, which act as preventives to a return,—but so it is, that seldom is

it found, out of the great mass, any considerable number are rescued from the awful state of prostitution; and the great aggregate which die in this way, and at a time of life before others at the same age have begun, as it may be called, *to live*, makes it an awful and distressing subject for the mind of feeling to contemplate!

Your remedy for such cases, if I may be allowed to say as much, without giving offence, will fail, I am fully satisfied, nine times in ten, or even ninety-nine times in a hundred, of coming to the necessity of the measure. You say, (page 8,) 'if any such female will go to a parish officer, acknowledging that she hath been an unfortunate girl of the town,—that she longs to escape from such a life of infamy, but has no means of procuring support,—that they will gain her prompt admission into the workhouse.' But allow me to ask, is not this expecting more from characters of such a complexion than is reasonably to be supposed that they will perform? Do pause, Sir, and consider what is here proposed. A woman of the town is to go voluntarily to a parish officer, without a friend to introduce her, or to conciliate any affection towards her;—she is to make an open acknowledgment of what, if there be a spark of modesty remaining, she cannot but feel reluctant to divulge;—she is to beg for admission into the workhouse, when she well knows that the laws make her liable to be sent to a house of correction; and thus she is to throw herself, with her own confession as a criminal, upon the mercy of a parish officer, of whose tenderness or the contrary she knows nothing! According to my apprehension of things, if there be any woman of the town capable of so doing, and so trusting, it would argue no small portion of grace, and very different from what we have reason to look for, among many of those unhappy daughters of sin and uncleanness.

But, Sir, even more than this you seem to expect, in

the event of such an one not being successful with the parish officer. You say, 'that in case the parish officer should refuse to pay attention to the application of such a broken-hearted female, let her go to the nearest magistrate to seek redress,' pages 8 and 9. Surely, Sir, either you know nothing of the character of a woman of the town, or you lose sight of the many difficulties which must unavoidably attend such applications. This is to suppose poor creatures of this description to be well acquainted with the laws, and to be both able and willing to contend for what is right, notwithstanding that they themselves have been always doing what is wrong. A likely story truly, that a prostitute should appeal to a magistrate against a parish officer! What could she expect would be the issue, but being immediately committed to the house of correction? Do you really think, Sir, that though, as you say, 'her hardened countenance hath ceased to blush,' (page 9,) her sorrowful mind hath ceased to fear? You must allow me to conclude, that the remedy you propose for women tired of prostitution to get out of it, by application in the way you mention, is attended with too many difficulties to be often followed; and that very few of them would find courage enough, notwithstanding your account of their impudence, to make trial.

But, Sir, (that I may follow you on your own ground,) upon the supposition that they did apply, and were all successful in obtaining admission into the workhouse, do you fancy that there are no cases among those fallen characters, that would be less easily recovered by the regimen of a workhouse than a Penitentiary? Are all so obdurate, that nothing but the corrosive hand of severity could bring them over to habits of virtue and religion? May there not be some minds among them where more lenient measures than a house of correction is much acquainted with, might better be applied? Is it not notorious, in numberless instances, that in the

reform induced only by fear of punishment, when the rod is taken off, the amendment also ceaseth? Frosty ground will thaw in the sun, though the wind continue still at the freezing point; and, as soon as the heat is passed away, it hardens again. So the heart, like the earth, may appear to melt under certain situations; but, unless the whole nature is brought into the atmosphere of gracious impressions, there is no saving change accomplished.

I am very ready to believe, that there are many cases among these wretched women, which the house of correction might better suit than a Penitentiary; for, in such cases, there is nothing applicable in the title to persons of a hardened texture of mind;—but, at the same time that your pertinacity to parish laws and parish reforms should be so very great, that no other plan will go down with you, is a prejudice I lament to discover in a great mind;—and I cannot but hope that, some future day, you will see cause to retract the hasty judgment and censure you have sent forth against the London Female Penitentiary, and no longer think it of *a dangerous tendency.*

And now, Sir, had I time, or did it come within the proposed object of my letter to you, and for which I write, I could very gladly join issue with you in what you have delivered, in the latter part of your Address, on the important duties of parish officers. Here we cordially meet, and have but one and the same sentiment. It were, indeed, most devoutly to be wished, that men of rank and consequence, in their several parishes, would themselves, and not by proxy, go through the several offices the law requires of them. Much reform, much comfort, I am fully persuaded, would be the result of it among the circumstances of our poor.

But, Sir, while I lament with you, that things are as they are, in the too general inattention of many who

might be a blessing, in superintending the government of the poor, I believe you will think with me, that there is a sad inefficacy in the poor laws themselves, agreeable to the present state of them, to come up, in a multitude of cases, to the relief required; and without a revision and amendment, I hesitate not to say, that not all the vigilance of the best, wisest, and most diligent of men can enable them to do what their hearts wish them to do, in relieving a thousand instances of distress and misery which come before them.

Though I am no lawyer, and have never served in a parish office, yet painful necessity hath made me an experienced practitioner in both, as far as the poor laws are concerned. Many hundreds of letters have I written to the various parishes of the kingdom, in a way of petition, respecting their wandering poor, whose husbands or whose children have brought them to Plymouth, in hopes of seeing them. No situation, for very obvious reasons, can furnish out more melancholy instances of this kind; and many, I fear, in the event of want, have pined away in secret, rather than make their cases known.

I have often thought, Sir, (and while I am upon this subject, I hope I shall have your pardon, if I just mention my ideas upon it) that there is an ample remedy at hand to make our poor laws efficient to every case; and it would gladden my heart to see you, or any other man of competency and power, engaged in the accomplishment of it, for the happiness of the poor. The plan I mean would be to make the poor laws less complex, less entangled, and more easy and practicable. If you demand how?—I hesitate not to answer, let it be done by this simple process: 'Let there be but one parish of the whole kingdom, considered as to the poor. However, in all other parochial concerns, the present distinction of bounds and interests should continue.' If this was made the founda-

tion of reform in the poor laws, this one act would remove a thousand vexatious things, which now arise to defeat the other salutary blessings intended by the laws for the poor; and, how presumptuous soever it may appear in me to give an opinion, I pause not to say, that all amendments in the poor laws will leave the evil still existing, if this be not the foundation. Nothing short of this can come up to a full remedy; nothing short of this can go down to the root of the evil. It was among the brilliant events of Mr. Pitt's administration that he simplified the custom laws; and, by this one act, he at once rendered that system, which before was so complicated (as I have been informed) in many cases, that perhaps not an officer in the revenue was fully up to the apprehension of all, so plain and practicable, that now the duties are carried on with the greatest clearness and facility.

Let the poor laws be done the same. Suppose only one parish for the whole kingdom:—instantly there is an equality of poor rates! Farewell vexatious lawsuits between parish and parish, in determining the poor man's settlement! Farewell for ever to the heart-breaking business of removing numberless poor families in old age to their home! Farewell the sad tales of sending vagrants from tything to tything, &c. —and a long farewell to the drains made on the poor's purse for law suits, and a long train of *et ceteras*, by which many score thousands are annually spent!

Do you conceive that any difficulty would arise in the administration of the poor laws upon this general plan? Not the smallest. The poor man, wherever he was found, if poor and needing relief, would have only to apply to the magistrate, and have that relief. If he was truly poor and deserving, the magistrate would find it his happiness to relieve him. If he was idle and disorderly, the same power would be sufficient to correct him;—and what happiness would result from this system, is incalculable to set down. No honest poor

man would then dread seeking the aid of the parish, through fear of being sent home, as a vagrant, with his family; for, in this case, every place in the kingdom would be his home, and every parish his own; and if it was at all needful, or it came within my province, in proof of the usefulness of this plan, I should find it no difficult matter to point out several other admirable advantages which would result from this mode of governing the poor. By equalizing the poor rates, the land of our large manufacturing towns (where there is the greatest portion of poor, and consequently heavier poor rates, and by so much, the land less valuable) would rise in value; and as one common interest then would act upon the mind of the whole kingdom respecting the poor, what vast savings would be made to what is now done, when one parish hath no concern or interest, in how great an expense soever, in case of dispute, they put another parish to!

I do not see why, upon the presumption of one parish and one general bank, for the wants of that parish (which is the whole kingdom of the poor) being of course fixed in the metropolis, into which, as into a great reservoir, all the returns of the poor rate monies might run; and from whence it might revert back again in streams, as the several counties, towns, and parishes from time to time should require. I do not see why this bank might not be also made useful to minister to the wants of the state as might be found necessary in loans, &c., when, very evidently, no injury could possibly accrue from it to the interests of the poor.

But I am departing from the immediate subject of my letter. I beg pardon for the digression into which I have been led, from the perusal of your very just remarks on parish officers. Let the whole, however, of what I have advanced on these points, be read in a parenthesis.

It was in defence of the London Female Penitentiary

for which I took up my pen; and as long as I am able to hold it, will I retain it for that purpose. Indeed, the more I consider the situation of these forlorn outcasts of society, who are the immediate objects of this charity, the more I feel interested to say or do all I can to help them.—To behold the tenderest part of our common nature, and formed as the female mind is, with peculiar softness, by the great author of it, for all the endearments of affection, thrown out and left to perish, is, in my view, one of the most distressing sights the human mind can contemplate!

Although I would not stand forth an apologist for sin, in any of its multiform shapes; yet, when I consider the history of a Magdalene, in her first departure from the sweet chastity of her mind, to all the after descensions into evil, which are, no doubt, in a thousand instances progressively and imperceptively made,—when I take into the account the artifice of seduction, the unguarded and unsuspecting frame of the female mind, and the many other collateral causes, operating as they do upon a nature in every instance too weak of itself to resist temptation, I confess, Sir, I feel a very powerful monitor within, prompting me to hope, that numberless are the cases of this kind, for which strong arguments to palliate their transgressions might be offered; and multitudes there are among them, such as our Lord had in view, whom he declared should go into the kingdom of God before the self-righteous pharisees.

You will pardon me, when I add that, in every way, and by every means, where my poor influence can possibly reach, will I step forward in the support of the London Female Penitentiary, convinced as I am, that it is a most admirable means, in the Lord's hand, for the recovery of such characters; and had it pleased the Lord to have placed my station near it, and the governors of the charity would have condescended to make

use of my weak services in its behalf, I would go forth, day by day, in the promotion of its interests;—I would enlarge the walls of it;—make room for the reception of every comer into it, that no poor trembling female who came for admission, might return as she came!—Like that blest city which is above, I would have "the gates of it" for admission "never shut, day nor night!" —and if the resources at any time proved insufficient to supply the daily bread for the household,—looking up to Him who hath promised that "bread should be given, and water should be sure," I would go forth in his name to seek it from every quarter; and when I had drained every resource, and tired, by my importunity, every heart,—though "the fig-tree ceased to blossom, and there remained no fruit on the vine," still my confidence should not be shaken; but I would, as the prophet did, look to the Lord, and hope in the God of my salvation!—I would return to Him, in whose name I had gone forth, present, in the arms of my faith, the poor Penitentiary, with all its inhabitants, and say, "shall any of those perish for whom Christ died?"

I remain, Sir, very respectfully your's,

ROBERT HAWKER.

FROM THE PENITENTS OF THE PROBATIONARY WARD OF PENTONVILLE PENITENTIARY TO

DR. HAWKER,

ONE OF THE BENEVOLENT FOUNDERS OF THE PLYMOUTH PENITENTIARY.

My feeble muse essays to sing
From gratitude what feelings spring ;
Friend of the needy and oppress,
Whose liberal hand and gen'rous breast
To the poor mourner yields relief,
And from the bosom chases grief ;
Tells them that Jesus will forgive,
And bid us guilty sinners live ;
Live to express his wond'rous pow'r,
That sav'd them in the trying hour.
When dark despair their minds assail'd ;
And sin and Satan near prevail'd,
Poor midnight wanderers for bread,
Who knew not where to lay their head !
For these thy care provides a home,
And thither bids the wanderers come ;
Teaches their souls the way to heav'n,
And bids them hope their sins forgiv'n !
Exalted, noble, generous man,
Oh ! yet pursue thy God-like plan !
And still our daily prayers shall rise
To heaven a pleasing sacrifice,
That when thy work on earth is done,
Jesus may all thy labours crown !

Dec. 20, 1808.

A LETTER

TO

MR. THOMAS PORTER,

IN REPLY TO

HIS DEFENCE OF UNITARIANISM.

Sint Scripturæ tuæ deliciæ meæ! Nec decipiar in eis, nec decipiam ex eis!—Aug.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.

SIR,

I MAKE no apology, for addressing you, upon the subject of your late publication, entitled, 'A Defence of Unitarianism.' The very distinguished manner in which you have been pleased to notice me in that work, and the title-page, declaring it to be 'intended as an answer to Dr. Hawker's Sermons on the Divinity of Christ,' seem to have this claim upon me. And though you might have found, among the numerous advocates of this great doctrine, many, whose superior writings would have afforded you larger scope for the display of your abilities; yet, as you have thought proper to single me out as the more immediate mark of this attention, I would not be so much wanting, either in civility to you, or in justice to myself, as not to acknowledge the honour you have done me.

Under a perfect conviction that the humblest instruments are sufficient for accomplishing the purposes of his will, who is pleased, sometimes, to choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," (1 Cor. i. 27.) I enter very cheerfully upon the duty to which by your treatise, you have called me. And am not without hopes, that what I have to offer upon your publication, will, with the divine blessing, contribute to the service of that sacred cause, to which my former endeavours were directed.

Mistake me not, however. I am not going over again the same beaten ground of the controversy, either in support of the proofs I gathered from scripture, in confirmation of the Deity of our blessed Lord, or to expose the fallacy of your arguments against them. This, I conceive, would be wholly inexpedient. *My* Sermons, and *your* Defence, are both before the public. And let every one judge for himself. Nor do I wish to rest the decision of the argument, upon a fairer issue, than what may result from their joint perusal. It requires but little attention to discern the justice of a cause, which appeals for its support, to the plain words of holy scripture, as they are found in the sacred volume, uncorrupted by commentators of any description, from the forced and frequently unnatural construction put upon them, to favour a socinian* interpretation. The humblest abilities are equal with God's assistance, to the discovery of the great truths of religion, and without that assistance, the highest human attainments are alike incompetent and vain. For however humiliating it may be to the pride of nature, it is a positive doctrine of holy writ, that "the world by wisdom knew not God, (1 Cor. i. 21;) and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they

* I hope I give no offence by this expression. It is very far from my intention. The application of *socinian* appears to me, to be the nearest definition of that class of christians, to which you belong. Though from the versatility of opinion in that order, since the days of its founder Socinus, I confess it is not strictly applicable. Indeed there is no term of distinction respecting your particular tenets, which can be deemed exactly specific. *Socinus* acknowledged the adoration of Christ to be a duty, and accordingly performed it himself. You, on the contrary, will not admit that worship is due to our Lord, and therefore forbid it. Of consequence, you cannot with strict propriety, be called a *socinian*, though this appellation is the nearest to describe the doctrines of your faith. Neither does the title of *unitarian*, which you assume, belong to you exclusively. The worshippers of one God in trinity, and trinity in unity, have an equal claim to the name of *unitarians*. But according to the present acceptation of the term, by an *unitarian*, I understand one, who denies the Deity of Christ, and in this restrained sense, there can be no objection to its use. The followers of Mahomet may call themselves *unitarians* much upon the same principles.

are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit," (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.)

And hence it was, I so earnestly requested in my former publication, (the necessity of which I would equally enforce now,) that to the candour and sincerity of mind, with which every serious person is supposed to be prepared for the investigation of such an important subject, he would add an humble supplication to heaven, and a constant dependence upon the divine aid, (without which no one can hope to obtain wisdom from God.) This alone will effectually guard from delusion in his inquiry, and enable him to discriminate "the spirit of truth from the spirit of error," (1 John iv. 6.)

The object for which I now write, though by a collateral tendency, I doubt not will strengthen my former arguments in proof of Christ's divinity, will however necessarily lead to a different train of observations.

In the opinion you profess, that 'the writers of the books of the new testament were not under a plenary inspiration at the time they wrote them,' (chap. i. p. 6,) you open quite a new subject. And while you hereby furnish me, with the strongest of all possible arguments, to the support of my cause, you give the plainest indication of the weakness of your own. Abstract every thing personal from the matter in debate, and then determine for yourself: to what a wretched situation must that man be reduced, who, in order to give consistency to his scheme of faith, finds it necessary to call in question the infallibility of the only standard to which all appeal must be made, and by which any of the truths of religion can be defended! Was it not enough to deny the divinity of the great Saviour of the world, but you must also deny the *full* inspiration of God's most holy word? Have you at length discovered that the *latter* opinion becomes indispensably necessary to the support of the *former*?

The cause I am engaged in, and the awful responsibility of the charge I sustain, will not suffer me to forego the advantage you have hereby afforded me, or to remain a silent spectator, of the dissemination of an opinion fraught with such pernicious tendency. Neither do I think it sufficient, in the ordinary duties of my ministry, to defend the spiritual interests of that parish only, over which I am the appointed pastor. But in so important a concern as the salvation of souls, I would, if possible, "warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," (Col. i. 28.)

In this opinion, I hesitate not to declare, that you will find me upon all occasions, a firm and zealous opposer of your erroneous doctrines; nor shall I knowingly permit the smallest opportunity to escape unimproved, by which I may confute or destroy them.

But though a professed and unalterable enemy to your religious tenets, I request you to believe, that to your person I have not the least disaffection or ill will. No, Sir! taught by Him, whose precepts I adore, and whose spirit I would wish above all things to imbibe, I hope I have learned, and his grace will enable me to practise, those great duties of brotherly love and charity, which are unquestionably the most finished proofs of our holy religion. Although I entirely disapprove, and utterly reject your system of faith, I respect your character. Upon the present or any future occasion of the kind, in which I may consider it necessary to write to you, while using all the freedom the serious nature of the subject demands, and indeed renders unavoidable; I trust I shall never lose sight of the candour of the man, the benevolence of the christian, or the manners of the gentleman.

Before I proceed to the immediate purport of this letter, I must beg leave to set you right respecting one

observation in your preface.* You seem to express regret at my relinquishing the testimony of the early christians, concerning their opinion of our blessed Lord. That I desired to waive the sentiments of the first fathers, and confine myself solely to the sacred oracles, in endeavouring to ascertain the real character of Christ, is most true. And it is equally true, that this was done, partly, in accommodation to such readers as cannot find leisure for application to ancient history; and partly, because the testimony of holy scripture, supersedes the necessity of having recourse to less important evidence. But if you were induced therefrom to suppose, that I declined the opinion of the primitive christians, from an apprehension that it was not favourable to my argument, you were much mistaken. Indeed, I venture to believe, that you could not think so. I take it for granted, that you are better acquainted with ecclesiastical history. Besides, it is impossible but you must know, from the candid confession of Dr. Priestley upon this subject, that the primitive christians of the *second* and *third* centuries, were orthodox in this great article of faith. And lest you should not immediately recollect the passage in the Doctor's writings, where he gives this opinion, I beg your permission to quote it.

In his defence of unitarianism for the year 1787, page 139, he thus expresses himself, 'I allow all that Bishop Bull and Mr. Burgh ascribe to the fathers of the second and third century. I allow that they held the doctrine of the Divinity of the Son at least.'

* I might find occasion for correcting several other observations contained in your preface; but as they are of a personal nature, and consequently of no importance to the argument, I pass them by. I am sorry, however, to perceive that you should lose your temper so far, as to charge me falsely, respecting my remarks on a passage in Dr. Priestley's controversy with the Bishop of St. David's. My cause is too good to tempt me to follow your example, or I might easily retort. The quotation I made from Dr. Priestley's writings, you must allow was a fair one. And as the Doctor had made that very material alteration in the words of scripture which I noticed; it was but justice to my argument to point it out. His recantation of the error, or the imputation of it to the inaccuracy of his printer, was nothing to the purpose.

After this candid acknowledgment, the Doctor endeavours to soften the force of it by adding, that 'this doctrine which they held, was in a qualified sense, and by no means the same that was maintained after the council of Nice. I have also, (says he,) distinctly shewn whence the notion of these fathers was borrowed. But what I maintain, and by evidence drawn from their own writings is, that while the learned christians were trinitarians, the common people who had no notion of platonism, were simply unitarians.'

A concession of this kind, coming from the great leader of your cause, however qualified by the observations with which it is accompanied, hath, I persuade myself, pretty well satisfied your mind concerning the orthodoxy of the first fathers. For from this frank acknowledgment of the sentiments of the second and third centuries, unsupported by any other testimonies, arises a fair implication of the sentiments of the first. And it is not highly probable, that the *learned* christians of those days, should have been trinitarians, and the *common people* unitarians: for without insisting on the general observation, that the great mass of the vulgar, are for the most part influenced by the example of their betters; it may also be remarked that it was the *common people* of whom Pliny takes notice, when he says, it was their custom to sing hymns to Christ as God. His expression is, *Christo tanquam Deo.* Dr. Jortin also very pertinently observes in his remarks on ecclesiastical history, that 'if the opinion of Christ's divinity had not pervailed commonly among the christians of the first and second centuries, how came it to pass that Adrian is said to have designed to deify Jesus Christ, or that Alexander Severus intended it?' See his Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. page 90.

But as a collateral evidence to these testimonies, I will subjoin the sentiments of two of the early fathers, and in their own words, and then dismiss the subject.

The fathers I mean are Polycarp and Irenæus.* The former I need not inform you was the disciple of the beloved apostle, and the latter the pupil of Polycarp.

When Polycarp was brought to the place of martyrdom, before he entered upon his sufferings, he gave his final testimony to his faith in a devout prayer, which he closed in this memorable manner. 'Wherefore and above all things, I praise thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom to Thee, with Himself, in the Holy Ghost, be glory now and for evermore. Amen."† The original may be found in Eusebius, who has written the life of this saint. *Διὰ τοῦτο, κὶ περὶ Παντων, σε αἰνῶ, σε δοξαζω διὰ τοῦ αιωνίου ἀρχιέρεως Ιησου Χριςοῦ τοῦ αγαπητοῦ σου Παιδος, δι ου σοι συν αυτῶ εν Πνευματι αγιω δοξα κι νυν, κι εις τους μελλοντας αιωνας. Αμην.*

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, likewise suffered martyrdom to the same glorious cause of the faith of Christ; and what that faith was, in his opinion, will best appear from his own words. For, 'the Son, (says he,) is the measure of the Father, because he contains him.' *Mensura enim Patris Filius; quoniam et capit eum.* Iren. lib. iv. cap. 8. Again, 'who from the eminent love which he bore to the work of his own hands, was born of a certain virgin, he himself uniting in himself, man with God.' *Qui propter eminentissimam erga figmentum suum dilectionem, eam quæ esset ex virgine generationem sustinuit, ipse per se hominem adunans Deo.* Ieren. lib. iii. cap. 4.

I hope, Sir, that these united testimonies will have

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* I might have prefixed to the testimony of these two, the opinion of Ignatius also, bishop of Antioch, who was personally known to some of the apostles, and is said to have been the disciple of St. John. His words are very remarkable, *Ἐπιτρέψατέ μοι μιμητὴν εἶναι Πάθους Χριςοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ μοῦ*; that is, "permit me to be an imitator of the passion of Christ my God. Vid. Epist. Roman. It is unnecessary to add, that he was a martyr to the christian faith.

† See Euseb. Eccles. lib. iv. cap. 15.

their proper weight upon your mind, and that you will be convinced therefrom, that if in pursuing the stream of information, on the interesting question of our blessed Lord's divinity, I stopped not at the brooks by the way; it was not from an apprehension, that the tendency of their currents might be unfavourable to my object, but from a firm opinion, that our thirst for truth, could only be fully allayed, by a direct application to its source, and that all delays could serve but to retard our gratification.

Notwithstanding, however, the strength of evidence which we derive from the early christians, in proof of the Deity of Christ, I cannot but still abide by my former opinion, that the sacred scriptures, and not the fathers, must be the great directors of our faith. A single page, in the word of God, which clearly asserts the divinity of Jesus, and proves it to have been the creed of the apostles, is the grand decision of the argument. And this I flatter myself, notwithstanding the pains you have taken in your animadversions on my Sermons, the world will still continue to think, I have too plainly and palpably demonstrated, in those discourses, and by a reference to the testimony of scripture only, to require any additional evidence.

Thus much may suffice, in answer to your remark, respecting the testimony of the fathers. I shall now proceed according to my original intention, to consider that part *only* of your defence, which relates to the denial of the full inspiration of scripture.

Nor can I enter upon it but with the most lively sensations of gratitude, to the great disposer of all events, who watches over the interests of his church with such unremitting care, as frequently to convert what is intended to its hurt, into the means of producing some greater good. For when men become the undesigning instruments of accomplishing the very reverse of their wishes, and support the cause they aim to destroy; no-

thing surely can more admirably display a divine superintendence. It confirms and illustrates the doctrine of holy scripture, when it is said that "he taketh the wise in their own craftiness," (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

Forgive me, Sir, if I presume to apply this to your work before me. In the first chapter of which, after a few preliminary observations suitable to what follows, you very plainly say, 'we are not of opinion that they, (the writers of the new testament,) were under a plenary inspiration at the time they wrote them.' The utmost I could have wished, in a controversy of this kind, was to have obtained such an acknowledgment. That when driven by the strength of the arguments from the divine word, in proof of the Deity of Christ, you might have recourse to this subterfuge. For while standing upon the ground of dispute, in the fair examination of scripture, you might have protracted the issue of the debate, to whatever length you had pleased. The various readings the sacred writers might be *supposed* to have intended from particular words, would, with *some*, have furnished almost endless subject of dispute, until our readers had become tired of the contest, and the whole had terminated as it begun. But now by your candid confession, that you do not believe the *full* inspiration of scripture, you bring it to a short issue, for it becomes a virtual renunciation of the whole argument. And that a writer, in defence of the unitarian creed, should so openly do this, I cannot help ascribing to the over-ruling providence of God.

Your work may now very safely circulate unopposed by any orthodox writer; for like the animal who is said by naturalists, to carry in himself an antidote to his own poison, the first chapter of your defence, becomes an effectual preservative against the pernicious doctrine with which the subsequent pages abound. The believer in Christ's divinity, can desire no higher gratification, than to find, that the disavowal of this great article of

his faith, is so closely connected with a disavowal of the *full* inspiration of the sacred word of God, and that they both stand or fall together.

You may endeavour to qualify the opinion you have expressed, (as Dr. Priestley in his concession of the testimony of the first fathers hath done before you,) with giving your consent to a partial inspiration. But a *partial* inspiration is in effect no inspiration at all. 'For, (as a sensible writer on the same subject justly observes,*) mankind would be as much embarrassed to know what was inspired, and what was not, as they could be to collect a religion for themselves. The consequence of which would be, that we are left just where we were, and that God put himself to the expense of miracles to effect nothing at all. A consequence highly derogatory and injurious to his honour.' Is it not much more reasonable to infer, that when God graciously condescended to illumine the minds of the evnngelists and apostles, in order to convey his truths to the world, he took care to guard against the smallest error? He did not surely leave his work so incomplete as to give only a *partial* inspiration, without defining the limits of it! And may we not with great safety conclude, that the Lord would not, (as it is said he did,) "have confirmed the word with signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," (Heb. ii. 4.) had that word even in a single instance of doctrine been false or erroneous? The conclusion therefore we are obliged to draw from it is, that if God did not impress the sanction of his authority upon any particular part or parts of his sacred word, to the rejection of the rest, but confirmed the whole without any distinction whatever, the whole must be received. The solemn precept given by Moses, on the delivery of the law, certainly operates with equal authority through all the gospel. "Ye shall not add to

* Seed, in his Sermons, vol. ii. page 322.

the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it," (Deut. iv. 2.) And it is an awful consideration, and may be well worthy of your serious regard; whether the punishment which is threatened in the book of the Revelations, to a conduct of this nature, (and with which the sacred canon of scripture closes,) may not be supposed to imply, the veneration which is alike due to all. "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book; if any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book," (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.)

As you have therefore so openly and without reserve declared, that 'you are not of opinion, that the writers of the books of the new testament, were under a plenary inspiration at the time they wrote them,' our dispute must, of necessity, be brought within a narrow compass, for the original question concerning the deity of Christ is lost in this. My province at present, therefore, becomes a very humble one. In endeavouring to rescue the holy word, from this charge of deficiency, in a *full* inspiration; I have only to extract the most prominent parts of the first chapter of your work, in which this sentiment is contained, and after making the observations upon it which I intend, I shall leave any man without envy, to the enjoyment of his own opinion, who chooses to accept of such a scripture as you would have it, for the standard of truth.*

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* A few instances of the alteration which Mr. Porter makes in several texts of scripture, from the present received translation, will illustrate this point, and may serve indeed as a curious sample of what further liberties may be expected to be taken, with a book, whose contents are not allowed to be written under the influence of a *full inspiration.*

You open the first chapter of your defence in these words. 'I am equally willing with Mr. Hawker, that the doctrine for which he contends, shall be decided by the scriptures, and it is with pleasure I take the opportunity of making this declaration; since, in general, the unitarians are represented as thinking lightly of the scriptures, and as rejecting the doctrines of revelation, merely because they are in some respects above their comprehension. But these representations are false. We admit, on the contrary, that the scriptures are competent to determine upon every point of religious controversy, and are willing to submit to their decision.'

Nothing can be fairer than this declaration, and

The prophet Isaiah when predicting the Messiah, chap. ix. 6. says, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, &c." Mr. Porter, in his remarks on this passage, page 85, says, 'It is highly probable the original text is corrupted.' And in support of this *high probability*, he refers to the authority of an *anonymous layman*, and an *anonymous society*, for promoting the knowledge of the scriptures.

The prophet Jeremiah, in his account of the Messiah, chap. xxiii. 6. says, "And this is his name whereby he shall be called; the Lord our righteousness." Mr. Porter says, page 86, 'There is good reason to believe, that this is not the proper translation.' And in support of this 'good reason,' the single opinion of a Dr. Blayney is given, as the authority.

Our blessed Lord says, (John iii. 13.) "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Mr. Porter says, page 35, 'If these words be taken in their literal sense, the assertions they contain are not true.'

The apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iii. 3. says, "Who created all things by Jesus Christ." Mr. Porter says, page 66, 'It is highly probable, that the words *Jesus Christ* are an interpolation.'

The same apostle in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. x. 9. says, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted." Mr. Porter says, page 73, 'Concerning this passage it may be observed, that it is very probable, our reading is not the true one.'

Lastly, to mention no more. The apostle John, in the Revelations, chap. i. 11. describes our blessed Lord as speaking to him and saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Mr. Porter says, page 101, these words are spurious, and ought to be struck out of our English bibles.' Wherefore they should be struck out of our *English*, more than from our *Greek* bibles, (for happily they are in both) Mr. Porter has not condescended to say. But I trust some higher authority will be demanded, before they are struck out of either.

These instances may be sufficient to shew what from *high probabilities* and *good reasons* (though unsupported by any proper evidence) the word of God must be altered, so as to accommodate the faith of the unitarian.

after such an exordium, it might reasonably have been expected, that every subsequent observation on scripture would have corresponded with it. But who could have imagined, that the very next paragraph should be the following!

'But when I say that with respect to the doctrines of christianity, we are willing to abide by the declarations of the scriptures, it is necessary I should explain my meaning. With Mr. Hawker and other trinitarians, we acknowledge the authority of the books of the old and new testament: but we do not suppose that our English translation of them is free from errors. It is allowed by all parties, that they were translated by men equally fallible with ourselves.. It is a natural supposition, therefore, that they have not always given us their true meaning: but that in some instances they may have been misled by ignorance, and in others by prejudice.'

'This we are pursuaded is the case, because many errors, which in their circumstances, it was impossible for them to avoid, have since been discovered.'*

If this be not confirming the fact, which you before denied, of 'thinking highly of the scriptures,' I know not what it can be called. Is this not 'thinking highly of the scriptures' to say, that 'many errors have been discovered,' without substantiating in a single instance, where those *many* errors are to be found? You could not surely suppose, that the truth of this assertion would be admitted, upon your sole testimony? No one would hardly flatter himself with such a persuasion. And I presume you must allow, that if the present translation of the testament hath *many errors*, those *errors* are as likely to be unfavourable to the faith of the trinitarian, as the faith of the unitarian. Hence,

* Page 2.

therefore, both stand upon the same ground; and wherefore the unitarian should wish to remove from it more than the trinitarian, requires but a small degree of penetration to discover.

Besides, if you really think, as you profess, that 'the scriptures are competent to determine upon every point of religious controversy, and that you are willing to submit to their decision;' wherefore should you endeavour to weaken the strength of their testimony, and render their decision nugatory, in advancing such charges of their inaccuracy?

Admitting that the translation was made by fallible men, must it follow, that in some instances, they may have been misled by *ignorance,* and in others by *prejudice?* And is it really true, that there are many errors since discovered, which, 'in their circumstances, it was impossible for them to avoid!' What *circumstances,* permit me to ask, were those men in, which rendered it *impossible* for them to avoid the 'errors of prejudice?' Was you aware of the nature and tendency of this accusation?

In answer to those unqualified and unwarranted assertions, I beg to present you with the opinion of the late pious and candid Dr. Doddridge, on the justness of the present translation of the new testament, taken from his sermons, entiled, 'The Evidences of Christianity briefly stated, and the new testament proved to be genuine.' I prefer using the sentiments of such a writer upon this occasion, very much to my own; and I pursuade myself, they will have more weight with you. As he was a dissenter, you will not accuse me of prejudice or attachment to the tenets of my own party; and as he was a man whom every denomination of christians honoured while living, and revere now dead; his character and respectability will give weight to his judgment. His learning and close application to

the study of the sacred word, are unquestionable; for as long as his volumes remain, those will afford the best monuments of both.*

In the eighth sermon, p. 240, oct. edit. the fifth argument of it is to shew, 'that the translation of the books of the new testament, now in our hands, may be depended upon as in all things most material, agreeable to the original.' He then adds, 'this is a fact of which the generality of you are not capable of judging immediately, yet it is a matter of great importance. It is therefore a very great pleasure to me to think, what ample evidence you may find another way, to make your minds as easy on this head, as you could reasonably wish them. I mean by the concurrent *testimony* of others, in circumstances in which you cannot imagine they would unite to deceive you.'

'There are, to be sure, very few of us, whose office it is publicly to preach the gospel, who have not examined this matter with care, and who are not capable of judging in so easy a case. I believe you have seen few in the place where I now stand, that could not have told you as I now solemnly do, that on a diligent comparison of *our translation* with the *original*, we find *that* of the new testament (and I might also add *that* of the *old*) in the main faithful and judicious

* The indefatigable labours of this great man, in the study of the sacred oracles, can hardly be conceived. In the preface to his Family Expositor, he says, 'That his reader will be unable to imagine the pains that work cost him, in examining the *order* of the several *texts*, and collating the different accounts in each, in such a manner, that no one clause in any of the evangelists might be omitted. That the first copy of his works was drawn up with hardly any other assistance than that of the greek testament, which he endeavoured to *harmonize*, to *translate*, to *paraphrase*, and to *improve*, just as if none had ever attempted any thing of that nature before him. Afterwards he compared it with what others had done, and where he found a difference, he endeavoured impartially to examine the errors on both sides, and in those instances, where he received benefits from the labours and improvements of others, he not only adopted their sentiments, but has readily acknowledged, with due thankfulness, to whom he was indebted.' Such a happy mixture of ability, application, and candour, blended in the same person, renders Dr. D. the most unexceptionable umpire for appeal to upon the present occasion.

You know, indeed, that we do not scruple, on some occasions, to animadvert upon it, but you also know, that these remarks affect not the fundamentals of religion, and seldom reach any farther than the beauty of a figure, or at most the connection of an argument. Nay, I can confidently say, that to the best of my knowledge and remembrance, as there is no copy of the *greek*, so neither is there any *translation* of the *new testament*, which I have seen, whether ancient or modern, how defective or faulty soever, from which all the principal *facts* and *doctrines* of christianity might not be learnt, so far as the knowledge of them is necessary to salvation; or even to some considerable degrees of edification and piety. Nor do I except from this remark, even that most erroneous and corrupt *version*, published by the English Jesuits at Rheims, which is undoubtedly one of the worst that ever appeared in our language.'

'But I desire not that with respect to *our own translation* of the *new testament*, a matter of so great moment as the fidelity of it, should rest on *my testimony* alone, or entirely on *that* of any of my brethren, for whose integrity and learning you may have the greatest and justest esteem. I rejoice to say, that this is a head on which we *cannot* possibly deceive you, if we were ever so desirous to do it. And indeed in this respect, *that* is our advantage which in others is our great calamity, I mean the 'diversity of our religious opinions.' It is certain, that wheresoever there is a body of dissenters from the public establishment, who do yet agree with their brethren of that establishment, in the use of the same *translation*, though they are capable of examining it and judging of it; there is as great evidence as could reasonably be desired, that *such a translation* is in the main *right*; for if it were in any considerable article corrupted, most of the other debates would quickly lose themselves in this. And

though such dissenters had all the candour, tenderness, and respect, for their fellow christians, which I hope we shall always endeavour to maintain, yet they would no doubt, think themselves obliged in conscience, to bear a warm and loud testimony against so crying an abomination, as they would another day appear free from the guilt of a confederacy, to poison the public fountains, and destroy the souls of men. But we make no complaint on this subject; we all unite in bearing our testimony to "the oracles of God, as delivered in our own language." Oh! that we were equally united in regulating our doctrines, and our discipline, our worship, and our practice by them.'

Thus far this excellent and candid writer. I know not how you may relish either the length of the quotation, or the substance of its testimony. But I will venture to affirm, that no man who is not far gone in the opinion you profess, that the scriptures are deficient in the *fulness* of inspiration, but must be struck with the force of his observations, and the justness of his remarks. The dissenters in the time of Dr. Doddridge, were so far in unity with the establishment, as to entertain an equal veneration with them, for our *English* translation of the testament; and appeals were constantly made to it, without the smallest exception as the ultimate decision of all argument. It was reserved for the unitarians of the present day, to discover, that the translators of it *may have been*, in some instances, 'misled by ignorance,' and in others 'by prejudice;' and that there are 'many errors' in it, which it was *impossible for them* in their circumstances to avoid.

I pass on to the next paragraph in your defence, which is of a similar nature with the former, and in the charge it contains, (if I mistake not) shews that you think *equally lightly* of the scriptures. You thus express yourself—'Neither do we suppose that the greek, from which our translation of the books of the new

testament is taken, is an exact copy of them as they were at first written by the evangelists and apostles. These books were composed long before the art of printing was known, and the original copies are now lost. In transcribing these copies, many mistakes might be made. Some letters and words might be left out, and others might be misplaced; in consequence of which, particular passages might be made to convey a meaning different from what was intended by the original writers. That this was sometimes the case is evident from the variations we find in the different copies; and indeed it is acknowledged by trinitarians as well as ourselves, however much we may differ in our opinions with regard to some particular texts. In order therefore to satisfy ourselves, respecting the authencity of any passage, we have recourse to the following rule: we compare the copies with each other, and then consider the connection, and judge from the preponderance of evidence.'

I might employ much more time and attention than I think to be necessary, in demanding the authority for what you here advance, and shewing the fallacy of such arguments. But permit me, Sir, just to ask, on what ground is it you suppose, that the greek, from which our translation is taken, is not an *exact copy* of what was first written by the evangelists and apostles? What though the art of printing was not known at the time those books were written, must it follow, that no care was taken to preserve the sacred records pure and uncorrupt? I presume you are sufficiently acquainted with ecclesiastical history to know, that the utmost regard was shewn them by the primitive fathers. They were treasured with the most scrupulous veneration as containing the lively oracles of God.*

* Eusebius, who must be supposed perfectly competent to the information, tells us, 'that the authenticity of what is called the canonical scriptures, as far

You say that many mistakes *might be* made in transcribing; that some letters and words *might be* left out; that others *might be* misplaced. All this is very possible. But it is not the possibility of the thing, but the fact itself, that we are concerned with. Can you point out what mistakes *have been* made? What letters or words *have been* left out? What particular passages are they that you *can prove* which *have been* misplaced, or suffered by the hand of transcribers?

You say indeed, that 'the variations found in different copies, make it evident, that this has sometimes been the case, and that trinitarians acknowledge it to be so.' What copies are they in which any material variation is found? What trinitarians are they which have made this concession? And what is it that those trinitarians acknowledge? Not, I hope, that there are *mistakes made*, and letters and words *left out;* or that there are any important differences discoverable in the various copies!

All that I have ever read, make no acknowledgments of this kind, that can any way affect the purity of the books themselves, or render questionable any doctrine which they advance. On the contrary they assert, that the variation found in different copies, is of so trifling a nature, as not to be worth notice.*

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as he could learn, had never been disputed.'—*Euseb. Ecc. Hist. lib. 6, cap.* 25. And we learn from cotemporary writers, that such was the veneration for the inspired book, that in the councils and synods of the early christians, it was customary to place the new testament upon a throne, thereby intimating, that this holy volume became the judge of all controversy.

* It is with much concern that I feel myself obliged to complain of an observation which you have made in your defence, (page 158) of a similar nature with the above, concerning the concessions of trinitarians; in which you say, that 'the words relating to the three heavenly witnesses, (1 John v. 7.) are spurious, as has been fully proved by many able writers; and that many learned trinitarians have acknowledged them to be so.' And in proof, you refer your readers to the controversy between Archdeacon Travis and Mr. Porson. The most charitable construction to be put upon this assertion is, that you have never read Mr. Travis's proof of the authenticity of this verse. And as I am convinced in my own mind that this is the case, I am highly gratified with the

But I am only detaining you by those observations, from receiving a more ample refutation to this last

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opportunity it affords me, of recommending this most valuable work to your serious perusal. In his letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. printed for Rivington, he has as fully and completely proved this verse to be genuine, as it is possible for any thing depending upon human testimony, and of remote evidence, to be done. And I persuade myself, from the candour you express in your publication now before me, that after you have perused those letters, you will not only be convinced of the authenticity of the verse in question, but will consider yourself as called upon by the most sacred of all claims, to recall what you have now advanced against it.

I lament, that the limits I have prescribed to myself, prevent me from selecting a few observations from Mr. Travis's letters upon this subject; I cannot, however, forbear remarking, that he has bestowed the wonderful pains and labour of investigating the matter among all the writings now extant, both of individuals and councils, from the age of Erasmus, in a regular ascension, up to the days of the apostles themselves; including, among a list of persons of inferior note, the testimony of Jerome, Augustine, Cyprian, and Tertullian; who all, either directly, or by collateral evidence, have testified to its authenticity.

Mr. Travis hath added also to the opinion of individuals, the testimony of public bodies. He hath noticed the assembly of Carthage, anno 484, and that convened by the Emperor Charlemagne, in the 8th century; both which confirm the authenticity of this verse of St. John. He mentions, in a more particular manner, that remarkable council of Lateran, held at Rome, anno, 1215, the most numerous assembly ever congregated upon religious subjects in the world; which consisted of 400 bishops, 800 abbots, the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, besides a number of deputies from prelates, colleges, and chapters. And what is most pertinent to the present purpose, is, that in the decree of this assembly, this verse was used as a quotation from the sacred canon of scripture. A more convincing proof of its being considered as genuine, can hardly be imagined. To these united testimonies, Mr. Travis hath prefixed the authority derived from the several editions of the greek testament, which have appeared in different periods of the church. The famous Polyglott, printed in Spain, under Cardinal Ximènes, anno 1514. The testament printed in England, by Robert Stephens, anno 1546, and that of Theodore Beza, printed at Geneva, 1551. All which have it. Theodore Beza, indeed, hath added this remarkable note to his edition, *in loco*, 'I am entirely satisfied that we ought to retain this verse.' And Erasmus, who, by leaving it out of the first and second editions of his greek testament, published at Basil, anno 1516 and 1519, first caused it to be considered as an interpolation, hath, by inserting it in his third edition, printed anno 1522, in my opinion, given a stronger testimony than either to its validity. For nothing but the most absolute conviction that he had been in an error in the omission of it, could have induced him, or any man afterwards, to have inserted it.

Mr. Travis hath not only brought these numerous and distinct proofs into one point of view, in support of this memorable verse of St. John, but hath as amply entered into an answer to all the objections brought against it. And his work is indeed so very replete with learning, candour, and good sense, that I could wish not only Mr. Porter, but every man who has been led to entertain the least doubt in his mind, concerning the authenticity of this interesting passage, would read what he has written upon the subject. I venture to believe it would prove satisfactory to every dispassioned person.

paragraph. The same admirable writer, from whose works I have before quoted, hath supplied as complete an answer to your charge of the *probable* errors of the transcriber of the testament, as he hath to those you bring against the translator of it, and both mutually confirm and illustrate each other. I beg to give it you in his own words.

It is in the same sermon, (page 237) and under the fourth argument, in which he observes, 'that the books of the new testament have been preserved in the main, uncorrupted to the present time, in the *original* language in which they were written.' He then proceeds. 'This is a matter of vast importance, and blessed be God, it is attended with proportionable evidence. An evidence in which the hand of providence has indeed been remarkably seen; for I am confident, that there is no other ancient book in the world, which may so certainly and so easily be proved to be authentic.' 'And here I will not argue merely from the piety of the primitive christians, and the heroic resolution with which they chose to endure the greatest extremities rather than they would deliver up their bibles, (though that be a consideration of some evident weight) but shall entreat you to consider the utter *impossibility* of corrupting them. From the first ages they were received and read in the churches, as a part of their public worship, just as Moses and the prophets were in the Jewish synagogues; they were presently spread far and wide as the boundaries of the church were increased; they were early translated into other languages, of which translations some remain to this day. Now when this was the case, how could they possibly be adulterated? Is it a thing to be supposed or imagined, that thousands and millions of people should have come together from distant countries, and that with all their diversities of language, and customs, and I may add of sentiments too, they should have agreed on *corrupting*

a book which they all acknowledged to be the rule of their faith and their manners, and the great charter by which they held their eternal hopes? It were madness to believe it. Especially when we consider what numbers of heretics appeared in the very infancy of the church, who all pretended to build their notions on scripture, and most of them appealed to it, as the final judge of controversies. Now it is certain that these different parties of professing christians, were a perpetual guard upon each other, and rendered it impossible for one party to practise grossly on the sacred books, without the discovery and the clamour of the rest.'

'Nor must I omit to remind you, that in every age, from the apostles' time to our own, there have been numberless quotations made from the books of the new testament. And a multitude of commentaries, in various languages, and some of very ancient date, have been written upon them. So that if the *books* themselves were lost, I believe they might in a great measure, if not entirely, be recovered from the writings of others. And one might venture to say, that if all the quotations which have ever been made from all the ancient writings now remaining in Europe, were to be amassed together, the bulk of them would be by no means comparable to that of the quotations taken from the new testament alone. So that a man might with a much better face dispute, whether the writings ascribed to Homer, Demosthenes, Virgil, or Cæsar, be *in the main*, such as they left them, than he could question it concerning those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Paul, whether they are *in the main* so.'

'I say, *in the main*, because we readily allow that the hand of a printer or of a transcriber, might chance in some places, to insert one letter or word for another, and the *various readings* of this, as well as of all other ancient books, prove, that this has sometimes been the

case. Nevertheless, those *various readings* are generally of so little importance, that he who can urge them as an objection against the assertion we are now maintaining, must have little judgment or little integrity. And indeed, after those excellent things which have been said on the subject, by many defenders of christianity, if he have read their writings, he must have little modesty too.'

Such were the sentiments of Dr. Doddridge, on the purity of that copy of the greek testament, from which our English translation is formed. I blush when I add, that those arguments of the Doctor's were originally levelled against the infidelity of *deism* only. Little did he think, that a period would come, when it would be necessary to bring the same forward, and without the smallest variation whatever, against the scepticism of *unitarian professors* of christianity. How close is the connection between unitarianism and deism, and how easy the transition from the one to the other!*

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* The argument might be carried yet further. Proofs are not wanting to shew, that there is a greater affinity than superficial observers may suppose, not only between unitarianism and deism, but mahometanism also. The learned bishop of Saint David's, in his controversy with Dr. Priestley, hath produced the copy of a manuscript, in the archbishop's library at Lambeth, which records the circumstances of a curious negociation which was opened on the part of our English unitarians, in the reign of Charles the Second, with his excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, ambassador of the emperor of Morocco, at the British court, in order to form an alliance with the mahometan prince, for the more effectual propagation of the unitarian principles, and which Dr. Leslie printed some years ago, in his 'Socinian Controversy Discussed.' The two unitarian divines who undertook this singular treaty, address the ambassador and the mussulmen of his suite, as 'votaries and fellow-worshippers of the sole Supreme Deity.' They return thanks to God, that he hath preserved the emperor of Morocco, and his subjects, in the excellent knowledge of one only Sovereign God. They say, that they with their pens defend the faith of one Supreme God, and that God raised up Mahomet to do the same with the sword, as a scourge on idolizing christians. They therefore stile themselves the fellow champions with the mahometans for these truths. They offer their assistance to purge the alcoran of certain corruptions and interpolations, which, after the death of Mahomet, had crept into his papers, of which the alcoran was composed. For of Mahomet they think too highly to suppose, that *he* could be guilty of the many repugnancies which are to be found in the writings that go under his name. This work they declare themselves willing to undertake for the vindication of

Your opinion concerning the metaphorical language of scripture, is the next part of your defence, which meets us, and demands attention.

You say, 'we do not in all cases, profess to understand the scriptures in a literal, but sometimes in a figurative sense.' This, no doubt, may with great safety be allowed. It is well known, that in accommodation to the genius and capacity of the eastern people, the sacred writers, both of the old and new testament addressed themselves to the apprehensions of their readers frequently in figure. But we must be very careful, that this notion of the figurative sense of scripture be not carried too far. For otherwise we shall be apt to confound the didactic parts of religion with it, and overlook the doctrine in the figure. The instance you have given in the 64th page of your Defence, in which you convert the plain language of an apostle, into the most extravagant metaphor, is a proof of the dangerous tendency of this opinion, and may be considered, indeed, as a specimen of unitarian ability in

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Mahomet's glory. They tell the ambassador, that the unitarian christians are a great and considerable people. To give weight to the assertion, they enumerate the heresiarchs of all ages, who have opposed the Trinity, from Paulus Samosatensis, down to Faustus Socinus, and the leaders of the Polonian fraternity. They celebrate the modern tribes of arianising christians, as assertors of the proper unity of God, and they close the honourable list with the mahometans themselves.' Such is the substance of the letter which they presented to the ambassador, and which the bishop of Saint David's hath inserted in his tracts, page 266, *et seq.*

And that no possible dispute might arise of its authenticity, the bishop hath added in the conclusion, his solemn declaration, of its being a just copy of the manuscript now extant, in the archbishop's library. He says, 'I do most solemnly aver, that I have this day, (Jan. 15, 1789,) compared the letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, as published by Dr. Leslie, in his Socinian Controversy Discussed, with the manuscript in the archbishop's library, and find that the printed copy, with the exception of some trivial typographical errors, which in no way affect the sense, and are such as any reader will discover and correct for himself, is exactly conformable to the manuscript, without the omission or addition of a single word. If Dr. Priestley should mistrust my veracity, in these assertions, (which I think he will not) I promise him, that I will at any time use my endeavours to procure him a sight of the manuscript, that he may satisfy himself.'

accommodating scripture to the fanciful hypothesis of the human mind.*

The next observation in your work is founded, I presume, upon the same principles as the former, in which you say, 'though we admit the authenticity of the books of the old and new testament, we do not hold ourselves obliged to believe every private opinion of the different writers, but those doctrines only which they were commissioned by God himself to reveal to the world.'

You ought to have known that 'no scripture is of private interpretation: but all that those "holy men of old (who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Peter xx. 21.) have delivered in their writings, have reference to the doctrines included in their general commission. And unless the apostles themselves had particularized any part as of a *private* nature, we are not at liberty to think so. It is incumbent upon those who take this freedom with the sacred writers, to point out where the line is to be drawn between what they call 'private opinion,' and what they admit to be included in their commission. And until this is done, and a sufficient authority shewn for it also, it certainly must be considered as the rash attempt of a bold hand, to make a schism in the inspired records, by an imaginary distinction of importance in one part, to the prejudice of another.

You proceed to exemplify this by a proof, as you are pleased to think it, of a 'private opinion,' in the sacred writers, from a passage of scripture history, when you say, 'it was evidently the opinion of the person who wrote the book of Joshua, that the sun went round the earth, but it has since been demonstrated to be false,

* The apostle Paul speaking of Christ, hath said, (Coloss. i. 16.) "By him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him, &c." —Mr. Porter supposes the whole of this to be figurative, and that it refers to a moral creation!

and has long since been discarded.' You will excuse me if I again express my doubts of the goodness of your authority, respecting this person's *opinion*. "All scripture, (the apostle Paul declares,) is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) And whether the person who acted as the amanuensis to the Holy Spirit knew himself, that the revolution of the earth was round the sun or not, the miraculous event there recorded, remains just the same, equally unquestionable.

Apprehensive from your manner of writing, that this is one among the circumstances you had in view, when you said, 'we do not hold ourselves obliged to believe every *private opinion* of the different writers of the books of the old and new testament,' I beg to suggest to you a consideration, which is not, I fear, sufficiently regarded by you, and with the reverence it deserves, or it would, I think, have prevented this confusion; namely, that our blessed Lord in all his discourses on the scriptures of the old testament, referred to them as to a pure standard of truth, without the least intimation that any portion or passage in the holy book was erroneous or corrupt. And in all Christ's pointed reproofs to the jews, when he even charged them with "having made the word of God of none effect by their tradition," (Matt. xv. 6,) he never once intimated, that they had corrupted the purity of the scriptures, by the introduction of any thing of their own into the sacred volume, or of having mingled human inventions with divine truths. But on the contrary, he referred to it as to an infallible guide upon all occasions. He recommended its constant use. He commanded the most diligent study of it, as the very means of discovering his true character in the testimony it bore to him.

Now I appeal to you, whether you can suppose it possible, that Christ, (if considered only in the light in which *you* regard him as a perfect teacher sent by God) would have done this, without qualifying his recom-

mendation and precept with a proper reserve, had he known that any part of it was false or exceptionable? Sceptics may call in question this miraculous circumstance in the history of Joshua, or any other of the supernatural events recorded in the divine word, but do not be offended with me, Sir, if I observe, that such things come rather with an ill grace from *you*, whose duty as a teacher, is to preserve, as much as possible, the highest veneration for the scriptures, in an age not too much inclined to reverence those pure oracles of God.

I am very thankful to you for the account you have given in the next paragraph of your defence, of the sentiments of the evangelists, concerning the demoniacs in the gospel; in which you say, 'it was the opinion of the evangelists, that the lunatics, of whom they give us an account in their histories, were possessed by demons; and this was the prevailing notion of the times. There are, however, few thinking persons now who do not consider these possessions as a species of insanity.'

What the sentiments of *free thinkers* may be concerning those extraordinary cases, I am but little interested to know. It is sufficient with me, that the 'evangelists thought them to be possessed by demons,' (and which, if I needed, I have your authority for,) to induce *me* to think the same. And that those possessions could not belong to any species of insanity is, I think, so evident, that I am only astonished how any man who thinks at all *seriously*, can adopt a contrary opinion. There are so many circumstances in proof of it, as put the matter beyond all doubt. As first—the demoniacs mentioned in the gospel, are invariably called by their proper name; which not only defines the disease itself, but what is very remarkable to the present argument, expressly distinguishes it from that of lunacy. It is said, that "they brought unto Jesus all sick people that

were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with *devils*, and those which were *lunatic*," (Matt. iv. 25.) This enumeration of *both* diseases, and the precise distinction of *each*, is certainly sufficient to prove, that they are a distinct species of malady, and by no means one and the same. Secondly, our Lord's speaking to the evil spirits, and they to him, and upon some occasions suffering them not to speak, (Luke iv. 34, 35, 41; Mark i. 34:) all which is related by the evangelists, as an immediate conference between Christ and them, independent of the persons under the demoniac influence: these also are very distinguishing properties of the specific nature of the disease, and very fully demonstrate what the sacred historians have said, that the unhappy persons so afflicted, were really possessed by demons. And lastly, added to these circumstances, the preternatural effects exhibited at the command of Jesus, upon those evil spirits which possessed the man who had his dwelling among the tombs, to whom *fetters and chains* became no bands; the profession which the demons made of their knowledge of Christ, that "he was the Son of God:" their request that "he would not torment them before the time, but that if he cast them out, he would suffer them to enter into the herd of swine:" our Lord's permission, and the immediate consequence of this event, hurrying them "into the sea," while the man on whom the miracle had been wrought, remained with Jesus, freed from demoniac phrensy, and in his right mind: (Luke viii. 27, *et seq.*) these striking distinctions, so remote from every symptom of any other distemper, are not to be accounted for on the presumption of *lunacy;* but very satisfactorily justify the evangelists in their *opinion*, (if they needed justification,) that the unhappy creatures labouring under those afflictions, were literally and truly *possessed by demons.*

Pious persons, (and probably as capable of thinking

as any to whom you allude,) have been led to suppose, that these extraordinary cases of demoniac influence on the bodies of men, were permitted during the season of our Lord's ministry in the flesh, in order to afford the more illustrious proof of the divinity of his person, and the great end of his mission, who "came to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) But whether this conjecture be well founded or not, the reasons I have assigned, very fully prove, that the disease itself was totally distinct from every species of insanity. And as you have confessed, that the *evangelists themselves* were of this opinion; you should, I think, have brought some more substantial reason than you have done, to justify a departure from it. I know not what your sentiments may be, but this is what *I* call *thinking lightly of the scriptures,* when without any authority more than his *ipse dixit,* any man presumes to question the sense of the evangelists, sets up his own opinion in opposition to it, and considers one of the greatest miracles of Christ, in no higher light than the cure of an ordinary disease.

But the finishing instance of the freedom you have assumed with the sacred scriptures, remains yet to be noticed; and that is, in the unreserved declaration which you have made, that the different writers of the books of the new testament, were not under the influence of a *full* inspiration at the time they wrote them. But that I may be in no danger of a misrepresentation, let me express your sentiments in your own words. You say, 'I observe, that though we allow the different writers of the new testament to have written the books attributed to them, we are not of opinion, that they were under a plenary inspiration at the time they wrote them.' And thus, after having admitted, in the opening of this chapter, that 'the scriptures are competent to determine upon every point of religious controversy, and that you are willing to submit to their decision;' you take

effectual care in conclusion, that their decision shall not at any time operate to the prejudice of your doctrine, but a door be always left open for appeal against their authority, in the *supposed* deficiency of a *plenary* inspiration.

I cannot help remarking, that the *manner* also in which you have delivered those extraordinary sentiments on the subject of inspiration, is no less curious than the sentiments themselves. It is all done in a regular and progressive order. You do not at once open your 'Defence of Unitarianism,' in a denial of the full inspiration of scripture; but by gradual means prepare the reader for it. The first thing you advance is but a *supposition only*, that our *present English translation* of the old and new testament, is not free from *errors*. The *next* rises to a *probability* that the *greek copy*, from whence the translation of the new testament was taken, *might be* erroneous. From these preliminaries the attack becomes more pointed; and we are next informed, that as the scriptures are to be understood not always in a *literal*, but sometimes in a *figurative* sense, the *unitarians* are of opinion, that this may be the case in other instances. Arrived thus far in stating the inaccuracies of the present scripture copy, all reserve is now thrown off, and we are led to suppose, that the sacred writers had their *private opinions*, as well as their commission of public doctrines, and therefore the 'unitarians do not hold themselves obliged to believe every private opinion of the different writers.' At length the whole is wound up into a declaration, that the apostles and evangelists were not under a *plenary inspiration* at the time they wrote the books of the new testament. Thus rising by a climax, which must be confessed to be extremely natural from *errors* of *translators* to *errors* of *transcribers*, and rejecting as you go on, under the notion of *figurative language* and *private opinion*, whatever you meet in the way

unfavourable to your doctrine, you ascend finally into an open denial of the *full* inspiration of the sacred word.

Now though I consider the controversy, concerning the original question of our blessed Lord's divinity, to be totally ended by this declaration, (for however humble an opinion you may be pleased to entertain of my abilities, I cannot bring myself to suppose, that you think me weak enough to argue with one, who in the denial of a *plenary* inspiration of the scriptures, rejects the only standard of decision, in the dispute to which I can appeal,) yet as the doctrine you have hereby advanced, strikes at the very root of the gospel, and would, if true, leave it neither stem nor branch, it becomes my duty to render the blow nerveless and impotent.

Indeed, Sir, I cannot but view this declaration of your's, as the last expedient to prop a falling cause, or you never would have had recourse to it. You could not but have been sensible, that if the *inspiration* of the sacred records becomes but *even partially* questionable, their *general* testimony must be also weakened, and their decisions, upon all points, rendered vain. And to what lengths, opinions so dangerous to the very existence of christianity might tend, it is impossible to say. It would be a growing evil, to which no limits could be prescribed. And, indeed, if the arguments against a *plenary* inspiration of scripture proves any thing, it proves much more than you intended. In your zeal for *unitarianism*, you seem to have overlooked this. It never struck you, perhaps, that by weakening the authority of inspiration, in order to destroy the proofs arising from thence, for the Deity of Christ; you lessened at the same time, your own arguments for our Lord's simple humanity.

But with these, and every other disadvantage in view, however injurious to the common interests of the

gospel, rather than admit the divinity of the great Saviour of the world, the testimony of the sacred writers is to be considered, if needful, as *private opinion*, and even the scriptures themselves as not *fully inspired.**

And it is under this shelter that you have thought proper to retreat! Finding all argument insufficient for the support of your doctrine, while depending upon the plain testimony of the divine word, you have sought for refuge in the supposed deficiency of the inspiration of scripture!

But even this resource, wretched as it is, you must be deprived of. The evidences for a *plenary* inspiration, if not as numerous as the evidences for the divinity of Christ, are at least sufficient to answer all the purposes of conviction, with every impartial mind, and to prove fully satisfactory. But as I observed before to you, my province in this dispute becomes a very humble one. Dr. Doddridge, upon the present, as well as the

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* This brings to my recollection a similar conduct of Dr. Priestley, in his correspondence with the late Dr. Price, on certain points of theology. Dr. Price, it is well known, though far from orthodoxy in his religious principles, yet differed widely from his friend Dr. Priestley, on the subject of *socinianism*. In particular, the *pre-existence of Christ*, Dr. Price conceived to be clearly proved from scripture, and he endeavoured, by all the arguments in his power to bring over Dr. Priestley to the same way of thinking with himself. In the course of his correspondence, he produced those memorable words, which contain the plain asseveration of our blessed Lord, as a proof in point; "what, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" John vi. 62. Dr. Priestley in reply observes, that 'though not satisfied with any interpretation of this extraordinary passage, yet rather than believe our Saviour to have existed in any other state before the creation of the world, or to have left some state of great dignity and happiness, when he came hither; he would have recourse to the old and exploded socinian idea, of Christ's actual ascent into heaven, or of his imagining, that he had been carried up thither in a vision; which, like that of St. Paul, he had not been able to distinguish from a reality. 'Nay, (says he,) to be explicit, I would not build an article of faith of such magnitude, on the correctness of John's recollection and representation of our Lord's language. And so strange and incredible does the hypothesis of a pre-existent state appear to me, that sooner than admit it, I would suppose the whole verse to be an interpolation, or that the old apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote another.' See Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, page 57, &c.

former occasions, hath superseded the necessity of labour on *my* part, by those admirable arguments of his, in proof of the full inspiration of scripture. And it is with great pleasure that I drop the pen to introduce the sentiments of so valuable a subsidiary. In acknowledging to whom I am indebted, my intention is to refer all praise where it is alone due. For I scorn to adorn myself in borrowed plumes. And as to the idea of accepting assistance from others, I would beg to say, as hath been observed, was the maxim of the modest and excellent Rollin, 'if the things themselves are good, it signifies very little whose they are.'*

The Doctor, in his dissertation on the inspiration of the new testament, (vol. iii. page 13 of his Family Expositor,) after having premised the great importance of a firm belief in the doctrine of inspiration, and shewn that it is of the first moment, not only to the edification and peace of the church, but in a great measure to its very existence; that if it be given up, the authority of revelation is enervated, and its use destroyed; and the star which is to direct our course being clouded, and our compass broken to pieces; we must be left to make the voyage of life in sad uncertainty, amidst rocks, and shelves, and quicksands; he adds, 'I desire that it may be seriously attended to, that a book, the contents of which are entirely true, may be said to be written by a *full inspiration*, even though it contains many things which the author might have known and recorded, merely by the use of his natural faculties; if there be others which he did not so well know, or could not without miraculous assistance, have so exactly recollected; or if on the whole, a *freedom from all error* would not, in fact, have been found, unless God had thus *superintended* or watched over his mind and pen. And in regard to such a pro-

* Rollin's Works, vol. i. page 75.

duction, it would be altogether impertinent and insignificant to inquire, how far did natural memory or natural reason operate, and in what particular facts or doctrines did supernatural agency prevail. It is enough if I know, that what the author says or writes is *true*, though I know not particularly how he came by this or that truth. For my obligation to receive it arises from its being *known truth*, and not merely from its being made known this or that way. And should God miraculously assure me, that any particular writing contained nothing *but the truth*; and should he at the same time tell me it had been drawn up without any miraculous assistance at all, though I could not then call it *inspired*, I should be as much obliged to receive and submit to it, on its being thus *attested* by God, as if every single word had been immediately dictated by him.

'It will farther follow from what is said above, that a book may be *written* by such *full inspiration* as I have described, though the author being left to the choice of his own words, phrases, and manner, there may be *some imperfection* in the *stile* and *method*, provided the whole contents of it are true, if the subject be *so important* as to make it consistent with the divine wisdom, miraculously to interpose to preserve an *entire credibility*, as to the exact truth of facts recorded, and doctrines delivered as divine.

'I have been more particular in stating *this kind of inspiration*, because it is *that* which I shall endeavour to assert to the *sacred books* of the *new testament*, and this without any exception or limitation, as they came out of the hands of the *apostles*. Though I allow it is possible they may in this or that *particular copy*; and in some minuter instances which now perhaps affect *all our remaining copies*, have *suffered something* by the injuries of *time*, or the negligence of *transcribers*, as well as *printers*: which, that they have in some particulars suffered, is as notorious a fact, as that there is a

written or a *printed* copy of them in the world: yet it is at the same time a fact which no man of common sense or honesty can seriously urge against their authority.'

After thus stating the nature of inspiration, and defining its properties, Dr. Doddridge proceeds to shew, from the wonderful train of events with which the life of Jesus was distinguished when upon earth; there arose an evident presumption therefrom, that God would inspire a certain class of men to convey the truths of it to succeeding generations, and after such a profusion of evidence as the revelation by Jesus was attended with, would certainly take care to render it effectual, by transmitting it from one generation to another, under some infallible records. I have to lament, that the limits of a letter prevent me from following this incomparable writer through all the parts of this dissertation, in proof of the full inspiration of scripture. But that I may not protract the argument, by a longer quotation than is absolutely necessary, I hasten to that part which he calls 'the grand proof of it derived from the credibility of its leading facts,' and which I venture to think is conclusive and unanswerable.

'I learn,' (says he,) 'from that excellent book, the Acts of the holy Apostles, that in a very few days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, the Spirit of God was, according to his promise, poured out upon the apostles in an abundant manner, attended with the visible appearance of a lambent celestial flame: and that in consequence of this amazing unction, the poor fishermen of Galilee, and their companions, were in a moment enabled to speak, with the greatest readiness and propriety, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Coptic, Persick, and a variety of other languages; the first rudiments of which they had never learned; and also to perform all kinds of miracles, equal to those of their master, and in some circumstances superior to them. My venera-

tion for the writings of these men, (and I here suppose I know those of the new testament to be so,) must be unparalleled, when I think who and what they were; and I am so struck with this plain but divinely powerful argument, that I must intreat my reader to review with me, a little more particularly, some of the actions and circumstances of those holy men, to whose writings I am labouring to conciliate his unreserved regard.

'Let them all be considered as preaching the gospel, in that extraordinary manner, on the day of pentecost; and a few days after, when some of their companions had been seized, and threatened by the sanhedrim, as anointed again with such an effusion of the Spirit, as shook the very house in which they were, and inspired them all at once with the same sublime hymn of praise. Let them be considered as afterwards led out of prison by an angel, and commanded by him to go and preach the gospel in the temple, under the remarkable phraseology of the words of this life; as if the whole life and happiness of the human race, depended on their knowing and receiving it. Nor let us here forget that extraordinary power common to all the apostles, of communicating the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, by the imposition of their hands. Had we nothing particularly to say of any one more than these grand things which we hear of them all, it must surely command our reverence to their writings, and set them at a vast distance from any of merely human original.

'But through the singular providence of God, it hath so happened, that we have the most particular history of the lives of those apostles to whose writings we are generally most indebted; I mean John, Peter, and Paul.

'With respect to John we know, that besides the concern he had in the cure of the lame man, he was favoured with the visions of God in the isle of Patmos; where our Lord, after an abode of more than half a

century, on the throne of his glory, at his Father's right hand, did him the unequalled honour to use him as an amanuensis or secretary, expressly dictating to him the letters he was pleased to send to the seven churches in Asia. How easily then may we suppose him so to have presided over his other writings, as to have secured him from mistakes in them.

'Consider Peter as striking Ananias and Sapphira dead with a word; as curing, by the like powerful word, one cripple at Jerusalem, and another at Lydda; and calling back Dorcas even from the dead. Let us view him in that grand circumstance of being marked out so particularly by an angel to Cornelius; and sent to him as the oracle of God himself, from whom that worthy and honourable person was to hear words, by which he and all his house should be saved: and after this, let us view him as once more delivered out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews, by an angel, who struck off his chains, and opened the doors of his prison, the very night before he was to have been executed. And let any one with these particulars in his eye, added to the foregoing, in which he shared with all his brethren, say, what more could be necessary to prove the divine inspiration of what he taught, so far as inspiration was requisite to render it entirely authentic. Or let any one farther say, upon what imaginable pretence the authority of his writings can be denied, if that of his preaching be granted.

'And to mention no more, let Paul, that great scribe, instructed in the kingdom of heaven, to whose pen we owe so many invaluable epistles, be considered in the same view: and let us endeavour to impress our minds with the various scenes through which we know he passed, and the distinguishing favours with which his master honoured him, that we may judge how far we are to receive the instructions of his pen. Let us

therefore think of him as so miraculously called by the voice of Christ, to the profession of his gospel, when he was persecuting it even to the death; as receiving a full and distinct revelation of that glorious, but to him quite unknown gospel, by the immediate inspiration of its divine author; which is a fact he expressly witnesses, and in which he could not possibly be mistaken. Think of the lustre of those astonishing works which shone round him wherever he went, and of those wrought in his favour, which shewed him so eminently the care of heaven. Demons ejected; distempers cured; sometimes with a touch, and sometimes without; by a garment sent from him to the patient; his motions guided from place to place by a divine oracle; Elymas struck blind for opposing him; his bands loosed by an earthquake; his strength and vigour instantaneously restored, when the rage of the mutable and barbarous populace, at Lystra, had stoned him and left him for dead. And to add no more, his safety in a shipwreck, and that of near three hundred more in the same vessel, for his sake, promised by an angel, and accomplished without the loss of a single person, when they had expected nothing but an universal ruin. Let us, I say, think of Paul in these circumstances, and with these facts full in our view, let us judge whether it is at all probable, yea whether it be morally possible, that a man sent out and attended with such credentials as these, should yet be so left of God, amidst all these tokens of his constant care, as to mingle error with sound doctrine, and his own fancies with the divine revelations which we are sure he received. Or, whether if he were not left to such effects of human frailty, in his preaching, but might have been regarded by his hearers with entire credit, he would be left to them in those writings, by which he was, (as it were,) to preach to all future generations of men, from one end of the world to the other; and by which, being dead, he

yet speaketh in all languages, and to all christian assemblies.

'I cannot forbear thinking this plain argument so well adapted to popular use, abundantly sufficient to carry conviction to every candid mind, in proportion to the degree of its attention and penetration. And I am almost afraid, that some should think I have bestowed an unnecessary labour, thus particularly to state a matter which hath such a flood of light poured in upon it from almost every page of the sacred story. But I have been obliged, in the course of this exposition, to meditate much upon these facts, and under the deep impression, I could not but speak as out of the fulness of my heart.

'Yet after all I have already said, I should be very unjust to this argument, if I did not endeavour to represent to my reader, how much it is strengthened on the one hand, by the express and comprehensive promises which our Redeemer made to his apostles; and on the other, by the peculiar language in which the apostles themselves speak of their preaching and writings, and the high regard they challenge to each; a regard which nothing could justify them in demanding, but a consciousness that they were indeed under a FULL INSPIRATION.'

Convincing and satisfactory as this learned author writes, and much as I could wish to add a page or two more, to what hath already been gathered from his writings upon this subject, I must abridge myself of the pleasure. It shall be sufficient only to observe, that the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which he alludes, are proved by him with equal strength of evidence, to confirm the certainty of a full inspiration of the books of the new testament.

He intreats his reader to consider how impossible it is to reconcile the promises Christ made to his disciples before his departure, of every necessary assistance, with

the apprehension that he should leave them liable to mistakes, both in facts and doctrines, which from deceiving themselves, would necessarily lead them to deceive others.

Those promises of our blessed Lord were to the following purpose. That "he would send upon them the Spirit of truth. That that Spirit should guide them into all truth. That he should abide with them for ever. That he should shew them things for to come, and bring all things to their remembrance," (see John chap. xiv., xv., and xvi., *passim.*) And, in short, such was the agency of this blessed Spirit, that he should abundantly more than compensate for all the disadvantages which arose from the want of Christ's bodily presence.

In conformity to these promises, on the very day in which Christ arose from the dead, he delivered the disciples his final commission, which nothing but a *plenary* inspiration could have qualified them to fulfil. "He breathed upon them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," (John xx., 21.) Which, (as Dr. Doddridge justly observes,) 'whether it signifies a power of inflicting or removing miraculous punishments, or of authoritatively declaring sins to be forgiven or retained, must either way suppose such a constant presence of Christ with them, as it is impossible to reconcile with a supposition, that they might err in what they wrote, for the instruction of the church in succeeding ages.'

Now from these considerations it would be strange, if the apostles could have erred in their *writings* more than in their *words*, when assisted by such a divine power, speaking *in* them and *by* them. And what is worthy a still further remark, the promise of assistance, not only extended to their general commission of *preaching*, but even to the defence of themselves, when

at any time they should be impugned for their doctrine. "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." (Matt. x. 19, 20.) May we not (says Dr. Doddridge) therefore on the same principles conclude, that when they were to write for the use of all future generations of the church, it was not so much *they which wrote*, but the "Spirit of their Father," who in effect wrote *by them*, and dictated to them? For the occasion will surely appear as important in the one instance as in the other; or rather much more important in the *latter* than in the *former;* as an *error in their writings* would have a much more extensive and lasting influence than a *slip of their tongues* in a transient pleading before the magistrates. It is but barely necessary to add, that as all the apostolical writings which are now extant, were written subsequent to the fulfilment of these promises of Christ on the day of pentecost, there can be no appeal against them, in any supposed deficiency of this divine power and assistance from on high.*

I hope, Sir, by this time, that the *full* inspiration of scripture, however questionable it may have appeared to you, to others less tinctured with your sentiments, will need no additional proof in order to procure an hearty and unreserved belief. The 'little circumstances,'† as you are pleased to call them, in the

* It is no inconsiderable addition to these arguments, for the plenary inspiration of scripture, the testimony of the primitive fathers to the same point. Even while miraculous evidences continued in the church, and when if at any time less respect might be supposed to be attached to written documents of duty, yet we find they were then held in the most sacred veneration. It would be extending the subject too far, to enumerate the several testimonies of the early writers upon this head, but if any one desires to see the argument from hence, placed in a full point of view, I would refer him to Dr. Lardner, on the 'Credibility of the Gospel History.'

† 'Though the evangelists agree in their general statement of facts, there are certain little circumstances in the account of which they disagree.' Page 6.

account of which you say the evangelists disagree, you might, I think, according to your own plan, have imputed to the *errors of translators* or to the *errors of transcribers*, rather than from such premises, to have leaped so hastily to a conclusion against the *full* inspiration of God's word. And forgive me if I think wrong, but I cannot but suppose, that had it suited your purpose in the present argument, as well as it seems to have done in others, you would very readily have availed yourself of such an expedient.

But I venture to believe, that the evangelists do *not*, in reality, disagree in their narration; and that there is no occasion to seek for an accommodation of their *supposed* differences in the errors of *translators* or *transscribers*, but that upon a fair and candid examination of facts, they will be found to be wholly imaginary. And it is, I confess, with no small astonishment, that I behold such flimsy objections brought forward against the doctrine of a *plenary* inspiration, by one who aspires to the superior understanding which you assume in other parts of your work.*

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* In the 14th page of your Defence you say, 'the reason the unitarians reject the doctrine of the trinity, is not because it is a doctrine above their comprehension, but because of the contradictions involved in every explanation of it.' Again, page 134, 135. 'This is the famous doctrine which is supposed by trinitarians, to remove all their difficulties. I apprehend it may justly be said of it, that it is attempting to explain absurdities and contradictions, by absurdities and contradictions.' These sentiments, Sir, are so very extraordinary in you, and especially after confessing as you do, (page 117) 'that the doctrine of our Lord's deity has been professed for a long time by the generality of christians,' that if I may presume to express my apprehension, I think you have 'overstepped the modesty of nature.' Surely you did not recollect, at the time you was treating the opinion of the whole body of trinitarians thus contemptuously, that among that class of believers are found the names of a Bacon, a Boyle, a Johnson, and a troop of characters, who, in point of intellectual endowments have ascended the highest summits of human learning. Methinks it would have been but modest in you, to have concluded, that men of such capacious minds, and possessed of such a grasp of knowledge, could never have taken up an opinion which should have driven them to the miserable necessity 'of explaining absurdities and contradictions, by absurdities and contradictions.' Were it not through the apprehension of offending, I should beg to whisper in your ear, that passage of scripture, "*μη υπερφρονειν παρ ο δει φρονειν· αλλα φρονειν εις το σωφρονειν.*"

It might reasonably have been expected, that the charges you make of the want of the full inspiration of scripture, would have been substantiated with some new and very powerful evidences in justification of your opinion. Instead of which, the trifling inaccuracies of the evangelists in their relation of a few historical events, are the only ostensible reason on which you found this extraordinary sentiment. But you might have discovered in the writings of the deists, many of a like nature, which would have strengthened you in this way of thinking. Hume, and Bolingbroke, and Hobbes, would have supplied you with abundant materials of this kind. And if you would have condescended so far as to have perused their cotemporary writers and opponents, you might have been as easily accommodated with their complete refutation. It is not, however, my province to furnish you with arguments, but simply to reply to those which you have brought. One or two examples will be sufficient, by a parity of reasoning, to judge of the whole.

You observe, that in the relation which the evangelists have given of our Lord's transfiguration, Matthew and Mark make it but six days after his discourse concerning it; whereas, Luke reckons it to be about eight days. But is it not possible that both accounts may be right? It is only supposing what, in the first face of things, seems to have been the case, that the *former* meant *six intermediate days* from the one event to the other; and that the *latter* included *both* these days in the account; which of consequence makes it eight; or as the evangelist terms it *about* eight; being part only of each of these days. Which manner of expression I would observe by the way, is not a little demonstrative of the thing itself.

The diversity of relation which the several evangelists have given of the behaviour of the thieves on the cross, is another instance which you bring in order

to weaken the evidences of a *plenary* inspiration. But I conceive the apparent difference may easily be reconciled upon much the same principles.

It is hardly necessary for me to observe, that the punishment of crucifixion, though but a single event in itself, was yet several hours in completing. And is it not very possible, that during this interval, both the thieves crucified with our blessed Lord, might have joined with the rabble at the first in their taunts and reproaches of Christ, until *one* of them, overawed by the prodigies which attended that awful season, became converted, and his railing changed into prayer! I am confident, that there is nothing contradictory in this idea, but a circumstance in itself very probable. And this simple state of things at once solves the whole difficulty. Matthew and Mark gives us the fact, that both the thieves reproached Christ; and Luke to this testimony adds the further information, that one of them was at length awakened to repentance, owned our Lord to be a King, and sued for his mercy.

The other instance which you advance of a supposed contrariety of opinion among the sacred historians, in their relation of the circumstances at our Lord's sepulchre, may be as easily reconciled. Matthew, you observe, speaks but of *one* angel appearing to Mary Magdalene, and Luke and John relate that there were *two*. And had you recollected, that this woman continued a considerable time at the sepulchre, after the departure of the disciples from it, you might have supposed it possible, that the angels which attended the grave of our Lord, might have appeared to her more than once; and that at one time she might have seen *one* angel, and at another *two*. You will be pleased to observe, that there is no contradiction in the evangelists' accounts. Neither of them say, that it was *one* angel and *no more*, which appeared to her. Indeed in the relation of this glorious event of the

resurrection of Christ, the sacred historians seem to have been describing the different parts and periods of it. They all agree in the grand evidence of the fact itself; but we find an agreeable diversity in their manner of relating it, in order, perhaps, to gratify our laudable desires of information, concerning every thing particular in such an important article of christian faith.

The great light you may have pleased yourself with supposing, that your penetration has thrown upon those passages of scripture, to invalidate the claims of a *full* inspiration; hath, I fear, served as an *ignus fatuus*, to lead you into error; but it becomes too inconsiderable, to cast the least shade upon the credibility of the sacred historians, as inspired writers. Pardon me, Sir, I cannot help feeling for you, that you should ground your disbelief of a *plenary* inspiration, upon such a baseless foundation. And the more so, that you should condescend to make use of such quibbles, which none but open and avowed deists have hitherto employed, to support their system of infidelity. I doubt not the purity of your intentions, but surely you should have considered, that such arguments might have a very unhappy tendency with some minds, to lessen the veneration for scripture, and bring it into contempt.

The concluding paragraph, in your first chapter, in which you speak of the *honesty* of the sacred writers, is as curious as all the preceding parts of it, and forms a very proper finale to the whole.

You say, 'though I have thus freely expressed myself on the subject of inspiration, I am nevertheless persuaded, that the evangelists and apostles were honest men, and that the facts they have related are true.' I am glad you allow them so much credit, but yet methinks there is something highly contradictory in your sentiments concerning them. Is it possible that you can esteem them to be *honest*, and yet expose

them by your account, to the charge of the greatest duplicity, and even the most palpable falsehoods? For my own part, I differ so widely from you in this instance, as well as many others, that I should consider them as the most dishonest of all men, if the documents they have left behind them, were not written as they have declared, under the full inspiration of God, they are certainly fallen into that very crime which the apostle Paul speaks of upon another occasion, with so much abhorrence, being "found false witnesses of God." (1 Cor. xv. 15.)

A few quotations from their writings will set this matter in a clear point of view, and shew on whose side the truth is.

The apostle Paul says, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) Now supposing that this alluded to the scriptures of the *old testament only*, it decidedly determines the point respecting that volume of scripture, and becomes an evidence against which there can be no appeal. But I see no reason for limiting the application of what the apostle says in this verse, to the scriptures of the old testament. For if it be allowed, that the writers of that sacred book were under a *plenary* inspiration, so as to stamp the infallibility of it, no man will venture to suppose, that a less assistance was given to the writers of the new.* The superiority of the dispensation, implied an equal degree of manifestation of divine power. And that the apostles themselves considered it in this light, it is evident from the professions they make of their own inspiration, and that they were

* As the second epistle to Timothy was evidently written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, anno 66, and the gospels of the three former evangelists, with the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and several of Paul's epistles, had then been some time written; it is no improbable conclusion, that the apostle, when declaring that *all* scripture was given by the inspiration of God, might have in view the writings of the *new* testament as well as the *old*.

fully assisted by the Holy Spirit, through the whole of their writings.

"If any man (says the apostle Paul) think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things which I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) As much as to say, let the man who has received any spiritual gift from the Lord, by which he can discern more spiritually than another, shew his evidence of it in the acknowledgment of my credentials. And when the same apostle informed the Corinthians, that the great subject of his preaching was "the wisdom of God in a mystery," (1 Cor. ii. 7.) which infinitely surpassed the imagination of any man to have conceived of himself, he adds, but "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." And having observed, that all came to them from "the teachings of the Holy Ghost," he closes the chapter with declaring, that men of the world knew not the mind of the Lord; "but we have (says he,) the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. ii. *passim.*)

In like manner when discoursing to the Corinthians, on the subject of the Lord's supper, he prefaced his observations with an assurance, that what he delivered to them on that point, he had "immediately by revelation from Christ himself," (1 Cor. xi. 23.) In his epistle to the Galatians also, he commands their reverence and attention to what he wrote from the same argument. That "the gospel which was preached of him, was not after man, neither did he receive it of man, neither was he taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11, 12.) Words than which nothing can more fully prove the apostle's claim to a *full* inspiration. And if we add to these valuable testimonies, the apostle's account of himself to the

Ephesians, I conceive the point to be settled beyond the shadow of dispute. "If ye have heard (says he) of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation, he made known to us the mystery," (as I wrote "afore in few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit." (Eph. iii. 2.)

It was on the certainty of these truths, that the apostle grounds the importance of the apostolic writings, and speaks of them as entitled to the highest veneration and regard. Hence he commends the Thessalonians, for their ready acceptance of the divine word: "when ye received (says he) the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 13.) And so conscious was he of this, that he adds in another chapter, "he therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but God; who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." (1 Thess. iv. 8.)

If these various declarations of the apostle Paul do not very fully demonstrate his firm pursuasion, that what he wrote, as well as what he preached, was under the impression of a *full* inspiration; I must confess, I am altogether at a loss to apprehend his meaning.

Much in the same strain of reasoning on this subject, is the language of the apostle Peter, who in one of his epistles, joins "the commandment of the apostles with the words of the holy prophets," (2 Peter iii. 2.) and mentions the epistles of his brother Paul, in connection with *other scriptures*. 2 Peter iii. 15, 16. (A plain evidence by the way, that Peter considered the scriptures of the *new* testament, as well as those of

the *old*, to have been indited under the influence of the same Holy Spirit.) In his first epistle he asserts, that "the gospel was preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Searching (says he) what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified before-hand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them." (1 Peter i. 11, 12.) Nay, the apostle goes so far as to intimate, that there were some things which the *angels themselves*, with all their superior faculties, did not as clearly understand, until explained by the apostolic writings. "Which things (says he) the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter i. 12.) And the apostle Paul seems to have confirmed this sentiment of Peter's; when he said, that "to the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, was made known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.)

The apostle John also has given a decided proof of his conviction, that what he wrote was under the full impression of inspiration; for he stiles the book of the Apocalypse, "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which he sent and signified by his angel, unto his servant John." (Rev. i. 1.) And in his first epistle, he speaks of the "unction" poured out from the "Holy One," by which they knew "all things." (1 John ii. 20.) And still more to stamp the highest value both upon what he wrote by *letter*, or taught in his *preaching*, he declares that an agreement or disagreement with his doctrine, might be made the standard of judging truth from error—"We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby, know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.' (1 John iv. 6.) Which is saying considerably more than barely asserting the *fullest* inspiration.

All these circumstances taken together, are, in my esteem abundantly convincing, that the several writers of the books of the new testament, were not only under a *plenary* inspiration at the time of writing the sacred word; but that they knew it themselves, and were perfectly satisfied in their own mind, that the "things which they wrote were the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) And what a manifest inconsistency is there in your opinion, in the face of such solemn declarations of their's, to deny their plenary inspiration, and yet compliment them with the title of being *honest men!*

You might have spared yourself the trouble, after such an exordium, of writing so many pages as you have done, in order to give a socinian interpretation to the various parts of scripture which assert the Deity of Christ. Every reader of your first chapter, would have readily supposed, from the instance of freedom you have there taken with scripture, that an *uninspired* word might be brought to say just what you pleased. But to all that follows in your Defence, I consider it wholly unnecessary to make any reply.* The man

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* I would except from this observation, the argument you have drawn from scripture, in proof of the Divine Unity. To the several texts which you have selected for this purpose, you might have added as many more, and all the advocates of the true faith, would have readily joined issue with you in the most absolute and unreserved acknowledgment of the belief of every one of them. Indeed had you been better acquainted with the liturgy of the established church, the several offices of it would have informed you, that this doctrine forms a principal part in our daily services. But as it is from the same unquestionable authority, and from a great number of the most unequivocal texts, which prove the Deity of Christ, that we derive information of this important truth also; of consequence it becomes an equal article of our creed. And hence, by comparing scripture with scripture, the catholic faith is formed. We derive "grace (as one of our church prayers expresses it) by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the unity." Your disregard to this, (whether designed or unintentional I know not) has prevented you from making this proper distinction. And to this one cause must be ascribed, that vein of error which runs through the whole of your strictures on my sermons; which like the first link in a chain, unavoidably drags after it all its connected parts.

that can digest the contents of your first chapter, and sit down satisfied with what you have there advanced against a plenary inspiration of scripture, in opposition to that great body of evidence with which the contrary is supported; may swallow with as little reserve, the whole of the doctrine contained in the subsequent pages. But there appears to me to be so little probability of this, that I really conceive (however offended you may be with me for saying so) this declaration of your's, is of itself, the best and fullest refutation of your whole doctrine. An ordinary reader cannot help observing, that if it became expedient to your cause, to remove this "stone of stumbling" from the portal of unitarianism, before the votaries of that faith could enter into the full enjoyment of their principles, the reason is sufficiently obvious.

Having now answered the single object I had in view, from this letter, and rescued, I trust, in the sacred volumes from the charge which you have thought proper to bring against them, of a deficiency in inspiration, I shall take my leave of you. I have not the vanity to suppose, that any thing I have said will operate to the emancipating your mind from the erroneous doctrines you profess: indeed, my faith teaches me not to expect it. I know that this is not the province of man. It belongs to an higher power. It can be the work only of Him who made the heart, and knows the causes, which obstruct the truth, from affecting the minds of men, universally the same in all, to impart such light and instruction as shall enable the mind to discern "the Spirit of truth, from the spirit of error." And to him, with all possible humility, is the whole referred.

I cannot conclude without thanking you again and again, for the candour which you have shewn, in such an open declaration, concerning the *plenary* inspiration of scripture. And as you seem to confide so

much in the goodness of your cause, and imagine, that the socinian faith, long exploded, is again reviving,* I trust you have too much generosity, to desire the making proselytes, by any means inconsistent with the same frankness of behaviour. In this idea, I venture to suggest to you a scheme, which if adopted, will reflect the highest honour upon the openness of your proceedings, and at the same time more effectually tend to propagate the doctrine which you have now published. It is only that you would cause to be notified in some conspicuous part of your meeting, and recommend it also to be placed at the gate of every unitarian congregation throughout the kingdom, a similar declaration to the one contained in the first chapter of your work, that 'unitarians do not believe in the full inspiration of scripture,' and in return, I promise for myself, (and I think I might venture to answer for the conduct of my orthodox brethren,) however numerous your converts shall become, after this fair warning, your endeavours for disseminating the socinian faith, shall meet with no other opposition.

It is with pleasure that I lay aside the pen of con-

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* This is a point, however, which *locally* considered, is capable, I apprehend, of being much controverted. Either the accounts which I have received of the progress of unitarianism, in Plymouth, are grossly false, or it is rather upon the decline than otherwise. You may, perhaps, be better able to ascertain the fact. But on the supposition that its interest is advancing, I can only lament it. You judged very rightly of me, when you said, that 'unitarianism, according to Mr. H. makes christianity to be of little or no importance.' (page 184.) Indeed, I seriously think so. For with the testimony of the apostles in view, when I behold a religion, whose principal features bear so striking a resemblance to that departure from the faith, which they predicted should distinguish the last days; teaching sinners "to deny the Lord that bought them;" to slight "the aids of the blessed Spirit;" and to mutilate the divine word, by a refusal of a plenary inspiration; of such a religion, it is not enough in my esteem to say, that it is 'of little or no importance;' I conceive it to be injurious to our dearest and best interests, for it robs the Redeemer of his divinity and atonement; deprives the Holy Ghost of all his precious offices, whereby believers "are sealed unto the day of redemption;" and by rendering the authority of scripture precarious and uncertain, makes the word of God of none effect. Whatever importance you may be pleased to annex to such a religion, I can truly say, I bless God that "I have not so learned Christ." (Eph. iv. 20.)

troversy, to return to the more immediate duties of the ministry, among that body of people over whom the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer; endeavouring, under an abiding sense of the divine presence, and an humble expectation of the divine help, "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," (Acts xx. 28.) Looking forward to that great, that awful day of God, when you and I must both stand before his righteous tribunal, to give account of our separate labours. Nor can I have the smallest apprehension that the adoration of Him, whom the Father honoureth, (John viii. 54.) and to whom all judgment is committed for this express purpose, "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father," (John v. 22, 23.) can endanger my salvation, or subject me even to the possibility of reproof.

But bear with me while I add, that it becomes an object of inconceivable moment to your eternal welfare, to be thoroughly assured, (and beyond the possibility of failure,) whether in that awful hour, you will find sufficient justification for all the dishonours you have thrown upon the Son of God, from a perpetual misconstruction of the divine word, and from the presumptuous imaginations of the human heart, which scripture declares "to be only evil continually," (Gen. vi. 5.)

That "God who alone can command the light to shine out of darkness, may shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," is the unfeigned and very earnest desire of,

SIR,

Your's, &c.

A LETTER

TO AN

UNDER-GRADUATE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH'S QUESTIONS,

TO THE CANDIDATES OF HIS DIOCESE FOR ADMISSION INTO HOLY ORDERS.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.

My dear Young Man,

I had no apprehension when I last saw you in your return to college, that a time would come, and was not then far remote, in which I should find it necessary to send after you a letter on the subject of ordination. I had thought, indeed, and pleased myself much with the thought, that when you had gone through the routine of terms, according to the statutes of the university, and had graduated; shortly after, you would have quitted college for the church. And from the knowledge, the Lord hath graciously given you in divine things; I had anticipated, and with no small pleasure, the prospect of your usefulness in the sacred order; that when the great head of his church should call you to his service, he would bless your labours to his people.

But from a new system respecting ordination, recently introduced into one of the dioceses of the kingdom, (and which it is possible may in time extend to others also,) such a fence is thrown up against an admission into the ministry of the establishment, as, in my view, becomes impregnable to men of your complexion. A catechism is said to be delivered to the several candidates for orders, (a copy of which I have now before me,) requiring 'a full, clear, and unequivocal answer to each question; accompanied with a declaration, that if any should remain unanswered, or

receive an unsatisfactory answer, it may tend to their exclusion from the sacred office.' So that according to this decree, it is no longer sufficient in point of doctrine, that the candidate makes the most cordial and unreserved subscription to the thirty-nine articles of the church as by law established; but there must be superadded, a second subscription, to the several questions of this catechism, on the articles themselves. And what is yet more extraordinary, this demand is to be fully obeyed, however the tendency of such questions may militate in the view of the candidate against the plain and literal sense of the articles: the correctness of which, depending more upon the judgment of him from whom the questions emanate, than upon him from whom the answers are required.

How far there is a ligitimate authority for the introduction of this novel catechism, and making it the *sine qua non*, for the admission into orders, I stay not to inquire; indeed it is not my province; I leave the decision elsewhere: but for you, my young friend, whose views of divine truth can never be brought to quadrate, with the sentiments too plainly discoverable in those questions; I feel interested, and under the impression, I have assumed the freedom of addressing you upon the subject.

Perhaps it may be said by some, that had this been the sole design for which I write, it might as well have been made the subject of a *private* letter. To which I answer, not so; the subject is of no private nature; nay, it is of the highest *public* concern; it is in itself of such magnitude, and involving in its eventful consequences, such a train of things, that not only all that are preachers, but all that are hearers of the word ought to know it; neither can any minister or member of the church of England as *by law established*, with safety to his eternal interests, be ignorant of its existence and the obvious tendency of its operations.

The duty, therefore, which I owe you upon this occasion, from the concern I feel in your spiritual welfare, is not more imperative than the duty, which on the same account, I owe to the church of God. And if both were less importunate than they are, the duty which I owe myself, will not suffer me to remain silent and retired, while sentiments so inimical, according to my creed, to the best interests of the gospel are abroad in the world. On every consideration I feel constrained not only to come forward on this subject, but to give my statement of it the greatest publicity.

Nearly half a century hath run out in the wheel of time, and made long furrows on my cheek, since I first subscribed to the articles of the church of England, as *by law established.* And in the present moment of writing, it is with me a subject of the most heartfelt joy, (and for which I desire to be unceasingly thankful to the God of all my mercies,) that what I subscribed *then*, hath the same place in my esteem *now*, and in my warmest, most cordial, and most unqualified approbation.

And although, it be not my province to say how far another man, may or may not be warranted by law, to frame questions upon the articles; and to make the result of those questions in the answers given, according to his judgment, the basis of admission to, or rejection from the ministry of the church of England; yet is it my province as much as his, to use an equal freedom in relation to the articles which I have signed; and to shew that in themselves, when accepted in their own pure, genuine, and artless language; undisguised and unvarnished by any commentators; they are too plain and too palpable to admit of a different construction from their first and most obvious meaning. That beautiful stile of simplicity which distinguishes the writings in the æra of our good old reformers of blessed memory; and which, more or less, runs through the whole of the

articles, manifest that they were *then*, as they are *now*, calculated, and as they were designed, for popular apprehension. They are like the prophet's vision, and, as if the Lord, who watched over him, guided them; and as they wrote held their pens, and said as to him, "write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it," (Habak. ii. 2.)

Indeed it would raise a blush on my wrinkled face, old and nearly worn out as it is, were it otherwise. I should shrink from the attack with more alarm than the sensitive plant from the touch, were it possible for any man, and especially among the writers of modern divinity, to produce the shadow of a proof against the articles taken from the scriptures of God. I should tremble more than the Roman governor did under Paul's preaching, could it be now shewn at my going out of life, that those doctrines were false which in acknowledging the articles I subscribed at my entrance in. And what an accumulation of foreboding would the very idea, like a spectre haunting the conscience, raise to my mind, which no exorcisms of preferment could quiet, had my subscription to the articles been then *pro forma* to obtain the favour of men; unconscious and unconcerned at such awful duplicity in the sight of God!

But I bless God, charges of this nature are not with me; I have lived too long, and laboured too hard in the word and doctrine of sound truth, within the walls of the establishment; yea, and both felt and enjoyed in my own soul, and beheld in the blessed effects on others, those great things accompanying salvation; too strongly witnessed by the teaching and sealing of the Lord the Spirit, to need any other conviction. True, indeed, the articles of our establishment derive their legitimate sanction from the law of the land. And while that law continueth what it is, and unrepealed, its enactments are as binding and obligatory, or ought to be, as in the

days of the reformers. But I hail those ancient records of our church, and venerate them much more in that they have for the soundness of their doctrine, yet an infinitely higher authority in the word of God; and bring with them their full credentials from being in perfect harmony with the faith once delivered unto the saints.

I hasten, however, to establish by facts, what I have asserted by words. And this I shall very easily accomplish, by taking a comparative statement of the articles themselves, under their several bearings, with those unerring standards of decision by which they were formed in the word of God. I mean, however, to refer but to a few only of the articles, and such as are on the leading and distinguishing doctrines of faith. To do more would be unnecessary upon the present occasion; indeed it would be irrelevant to the subject of my letter: neither hath the copy of the questions, which is now before me, rendered it necessary to go further. And the plan which I mean to adopt in the accomplishment of the object I have in view, is simply this: I shall *first*, bring forward for inspection the article as it stands in our church prayer book. I shall then *secondly*, look into the word of God, for the proof of its soundness. So that by this fair, open, and unimposing method for the ascertaining of clear matter of fact, I shall then *thirdly*, be the better prepared to answer the several questions proposed in this catechism, and to discover how far they are, or are not, framed upon scriptural ground; and with a single eye to the divine glory in the establishment of the truth as it is in Jesus!

And, perhaps, it may greatly tend to facilitate this business, and bring it to a more speedy issue, (at least it will remove every thing which might be thought invidious,) if I place myself in the situation of one of the candidates for holy orders; and give in my answer,

as shall appear to me proper, whether my responses to the questions, shall or shall not, correspond with the sentiments of the person who framed them.

I confess that there is somewhat rather awkward in my proposal. Old men are not very fond of treading back the ground they have trodden in their school days, and stepping forward again to say their catechism. But we live in an inverted order of things. When systems like mankind become mutable, there is nothing so novel but what is soon rendered familiar. And in those days of masquerade, in which both men and things do not always appear to be what they really are, it would be no surprise to me, if from the versatility of human affairs, a time should come, when those within the church, as well as those without it, should be brought to question and answer. And if so, I am only doing that *now*, which, in another day, from increasing age and infirmities, I may not be able to do so well *then*. And even supposing that no such event should take place, before the hour-glass of my life hath run out to the last sand, it forms a subject of consolation to me to do it now, that finally and fully I may bear testimony to the purity of the articles of the church of England *as by law established*, and produce proofs of their perfect harmony with the word of God on which they rest, before I go hence and be no more seen.

Many of the Lord's people in the kingdom, who have never seen my face in the flesh, but have been long conversant with my writings; will be glad to discover the uniformity of my creed in the present hour, (now nearly at the close of life, with the earliest productions of my ministry. And those which have been, and still are, the companions and brethren of my pilgrimage in the church of *Charles*, among whom I have lived, and gone in and out before them in the ministry of the word and ordinances, for more than forty years, will be no less glad in reading what is here written with my

pen, of the same doctrines which they have so often heard from my mouth. And sure I am, the remembrance will tend to awaken the recollection of many a sweet season of spiritual communion, which, under the Lord's presence and favour, we have enjoyed with the Lord, and with each other. So that when I cease to speak, those labours will speak for me; and act under the divine blessing, "like bread cast upon the waters found after many days."

I begin the subject where the articles of the church of England, as *by law established*, have begun, and where indeed every subject which hath relation to the great truths of God ought to begin; namely, 'of faith in the holy Trinity.' For as this forms the basis of all the revelations which Jehovah in his trinity of *persons* hath been pleased to make of himself; it will follow, that a right apprehension of this fundamental doctrine, formed on scripture, and confirmed in the mind by divine teaching, can be the only security for the right apprehension of all that follows, in the whole superstructure of true religion built upon it, in relation to the church of the most high God.

The first article of the church of England, as *by law established.*

'OF FAITH IN THE HOLY TRINITY.'

'There is but one living and true God everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness: the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of the Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.'

No form of words could have been more happily chosen by way of making explicit, (as far as language can render so mysterious and sublime a truth, explicit to the human mind,) this great and leading article of our most holy faith. The words are plain, simple, and

perspicuous. And the doctrine contained in them, equally capable of being understood by the meanest, as well as the highest capacity: namely, that God is One, and but one in essence, nature, purpose, will, and pleasure. And that the *modus existendi* of his Being, is altogether dissimilar to, and distinguished from all creatures to whom he hath given being; for in this unity of the Godhead, there is a trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one: so much for the article.

Let us now look into the word of God, and see how far there is a perfect correspondence to what is here said according to those sacred records of divine truth. And here it is we find the most full and unanswerable testimony to this article of the established church: for the scriptures with one voice, and in one uniform tenor of language, confirm both of those revealed truths, namely, the unity of the divine essence: and of a trinity of persons in the Godhead.

In relation to the first mentioned, namely, the unity of the divine essence; amidst a number of passages scattered profusely over the sacred writings, in proof of this fundamental truth, I would select but one, which carrieth with it the fullest conviction, and is in itself so perfectly unanswerable, as to supersede upon the present occasion, the necessity of making reference to any other. The passage I mean is that sublime scripture in which Jehovah himself challengeth his whole creation, to produce a single testimony to the being of any other God. "Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts! I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God:—is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God: I know not any!" Isaiah xliv. 6–8. As if the Lord had said, had there been any other God before me, I must have known him: inhabiting as I do, eternity. And had there been any besides me, I must have met him; filling

as I do, all space by my ubiquity. Neither could there be any other but me, because in myself I comprehend and possess all divine attributes and perfections: so that there is nothing left which can constitute Godhead for another. Hence the Lord's own decision, "is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God. I know not any!"

And in relation to the other divine truth, namely, of the trinity of persons in the Godhead; never hath there been a single revelation, which Jehovah hath been pleased to make of himself, more fully or more circumstantially proved, and when brought home to the mind of the Lord's people by the Lord's teaching, more clearly understood, lived upon, and enjoyed, than this glorious doctrine throughout the whole bible. We meet with one scripture testimony upon another in full confirmation. At the opening both of the old testament and of the new, the blessed truth appears in large characters, as if by way of proclamation to all that follows, Gen. i. 26; Matt. iii. 16, 17. And in the perusal of those sacred records, we are as it were, graciously brought into the chambers of the divine presence, and there behold the holy Three in one, conversing with, expressing delight in, and mutually glorifying each other.

Let us refer only to a few scriptures by way of proof, which will abundantly justify the observations. Thus in Gen. i. 26. "Let *us* make man!" Gen. iii. 22. "Behold, the man is become as one of *us*!" Gen. xi. 7. "Let us go down!" Isaiah vi. 8. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*!" Compare this passage with Acts xxviii. 25. See also Matt. iii. 16, 17; Luke ix. 28–36; John xii. 28; John xvii. throughout: and every part of holy scripture teacheth the church of God, to look up with equal love, reverence, adoration, and praise to the holy Three in one, as the united source of all our blessings,

through all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory: both in the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. All which stamps with an indelible seal, this glorious doctrine and foundation of our holy faith, namely, the unity of the divine essence, in the trinity of persons. And which is as beautifully, as it is comprehensively expressed in that standard creed of our liturgy, where it is said: 'For there is one person of the Father, and another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.'

Enough hath been said, I hope, respecting this first article of the church of Englnnd, as by law established; and also of the authority on which it rests in the scriptures of eternal truth.

I now proceed, as was proposed, to bring forward the questions framed upon this article, and give in my answers to them according to my apprehension of things, whether they may or may not correspond with the sentiments of the person by whom they were framed.

The title the chapter bears in the catechism, in relation to this first article, is, 'of the holy Trinity:' and is placed the ninth and last in the order of questions.

Quest. 1. 'Are not the three persons in the holy Trinity equal in power, though different in office?'

2. 'What is the office of God the Father?'

3. 'What is the office of God the Son?'

4. 'What is the office of God the Holy Ghost?'

Before I give in my answer to these questions, I pause to remark, that I am at a loss to explain from what motive the several demands here made, on a doctrine which unquestionably ought to have had the first and prior claim, in point of dignity to every other, are

placed the very last, and at the fag end of this catechism. Far be it from me to suppose that it originated in any thing intentionally wrong. And I hope to be credited in saying as much, when I add, that it is with much pleasure I observe in those questions, the writer hath designated each of the holy Three, and all, with the same glorious name of *God*. But I must be allowed at the same time to say, that it would have been more suited to the infinite dignity of the subject, to have given it, as is most justly due, the precedency to every other. Such it is plain the fathers of our church at the establishment considered it, when they made 'faith in the holy Trinity,' the first of all the articles. And I dare not refrain from saying further, however it may expose me to displeasure, that as in the very nature of things, this fundamental doctrine of Jehovah in a trinity of persons, is that which alone gives principle to every other; all the interrogatories proposed in this, or any other catechism on the subject, will be more or less correct, according as they are found to have been framed by this standard.

Neither let it be thought invidious, or with the most distant idea to contention on the point, if I make another remark before that I proceed to give in my answers to the questions themselves, namely, of the manner in which they are worded. When it is demanded: 'What is the office of God the Father? What is the office of God the Son? What is the office of God the Holy Ghost?' I would say, is there not somewhat very degrading in the term office, when spoken in reference to either of the persons in Jehovah? When we contemplate the infinite glory and essence of the "high and lofty *One* that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy;" can any thing that is said or done by Him be called an office? And specially in reference to his goings forth in acts of communion with his church, whom he hath called into being for his glory: can it be decorous or

becoming in denominating ought, which is connected with the most marvellous manifestations of grace, an office? Will any man venture to term that an office, which is the sole result of infinite love, founded in infinite wisdom, and accomplished in infinite power? It is hardly possible to disconnect from the idea of an office, what seems indeed to be the very nature of it; of somewhat received *ex-officio* from another, and carrying with it a kind of responsibility. The Holy Ghost by his servant Paul saith, 1 Tim. iii. 1. "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good thing." And then is added, what duties are connected with this office; and for the faithful discharge of which, the person is accountable. But can such things bear the smallest resemblance to the sovereign, free, and unmerited grace of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, when calling into being the church "according to the good pleasure of his will; and to the praise of the glory of his grace," (Ephes. i. 5, 6.) May it not be said as with one of old concerning Him, "He giveth not account of any of his matters," (Job xxxiii. 13.)

Not that I would contend for a mere word, if that word did not in itself, incline too nearly to favour an heresy long since exploded, but recently revived in this land, as if to mark the perilous times, which God the Holy Ghost graciously taught the church to expect, as signs of "the last days," (2 Tim. iii. 21.) And with men of this description, it is the very system of their error, to substitute office for person, when speaking of the Son of God, or of God the Holy Ghost. For in relation to the Son of God, their attempts are directed to reduce the whole of his acts of grace, to the nature of an office; and thereby entice the church to overlook and forget the distinction of his person and equality, in the Godhead. And in relation to God the Holy Ghost, all that the scriptures have revealed concerning his

person, Godhead, and ministry; such men in the formula of their heresy, consider no more than the office of an *emanation*. In such awful times, and with such perversions in view, admonished as we are also by the watchful care of God the Holy Ghost; I confess I feel jealous over every expression which hath not the immediate glory of God for its object; and cannot therefore but enter my protest against words or terms which are capable of misconstruction. And moreover while I must think, independent of every other consideration, that the word office, when applied to subjects of such sublimity, as are connected with the ways and works of Jehovah, is degrading and unsuitable; I find myself justified in the observation, in that it is not scriptural. For it is not once to be found throughout the whole bible, in reference to either of the persons in the Godhead.

But dismissing these considerations, I proceed to give in my answer to the questions as before stated. 'Are not the three persons in the holy Trinity equal in power, &c.' To which I say, yes; the revelation which Jehovah in his trinity of persons hath been graciously pleased to give of himself, is uniformly proclaimed through the whole word of God to this one point. Each glorious person is not only declared to be equal in power and in the possession of all divine attributes, but proofs are every where given, where those perfections which alone constitute Godhead, and can belong to none other than God, are displayed in such acts of sovereignty by each, as demonstrates the glorious truth, and manifest what is said in one of the creeds of our church, that 'such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.' And what endears this blessed doctrine yet more to the church, is, that not only have we testimonies upon testomonies, in confirmation of the perfect equality in the persons of the Godhead, from the equal possession and the equal exercise of all divine attributes;

but in those acts of grace manifested to the church, each of the holy Three in one, hath shewn equal love, and grace, and power: and thereby demonstated, that equal love, adoration, and praise is due to Jehovah in his trinity of persons as the united source of all the blessings given and to be bestowed upon the church in time and in eternity. The compilers of our liturgy have well expressed this doctrine in one of the prayers, when blessing God for 'giving grace unto his servants by the confession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity: and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the unity.'

Among the divines of the old school, they were wont to express themselves on this sublime subject by this maxim: *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.* And surely nothing could be more scriptural and agreeable to the analogy of faith. For indeed all the works of the trinity, as relating to the church, are, and must necessarily be, undivided. The whole persons in the Godhead being but one, in essence, will, and power; though distinct in person, all is but one and the same work, resulting from that one will: however distinctly manifested in a trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Hence, therefore, when the question in this catechism demands: 'are not the three persons in the holy Trinity equal in power, &c.?' the answer is direct. There is the most perfect equality in the persons of the holy Trinity, in all that constitutes Godhead.

And when the question goeth on further to demand; 'What is the office of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost?' The scriptures give distinct answers to each question. It is God the Father in his own Almighty person, and as his own personal act, (thereby also defining by the way of this distinction of person,) which chose, and adopted, and accepted the church to himself in Christ, before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4–6; John x. 29,

30; John xvii. 6, &c.; Psalm cxxxix. 16; Eph. iii. 15, &c. &c.

It is God the Son who in his own Almighty person, betrothed the church to himself for ever; and by taking into union with himself our nature, distinct from the person of the Father, or the person of the Holy Ghost, most plainly defined his personality, and thereby comes home endeared to the church under those glorious distinctions by which he is revealed in the sacred word: "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall he be called," (Hosea ii. 19.) Isa. liv. 5; Heb. ii. 16.

And it is God the Holy Ghost who hath manifested and defined, both his person, Godhead, and ministry, in having taken an equal part in the covenant of grace, and by the unction both of the head of the body the church, and the members, hath shewn equal acts of sovereignty with the Father and the Son; in testimony both of his love to the church, and of his own eternal power and Godhead. Isaiah lxi. 1; Titus iii. 5, 6. And as the several acts of grace of each person in Jehovah manifested to our nature, are equal, and such as none but God himself could have wrought; whether we contemplate the everlasting love of God the Father in his choice of the church; God the Son marrying and redeeming the church; or God the Holy Ghost regenerating the church; in each and all of these divine acts, we are taught to behold the glory of the holy undivided Trinity, the one united object of our adoration, love, and praise to all eternity. Hence this first and leading acticle of our church, as established by law, 'of faith in the holy Trinity,' stands upon a firm and immovable foundation. And we may, and do say, most confidently in the language of the church: 'there is but one living and true God everlasting; in the unity

of which Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity.'

But while thus much might suffice by way of answer to the several questions in this part of the catechism, as far as relates to the doctrine itself; we must not stop here if we are in pursuit of the personal knowledge and apprehension of the great truth as it relates to ourselves. Somewhat more is required than the mere letter can convey, in order to impart a *spiritual* understanding of their saving operations in the heart. God the Holy Ghost hath, in a great variety of scriptures declared this solemn doctrine, and in a tone of decision against which there can be no appeal. One passage in the sacred word will be as full to the purpose as a thousand. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (2 Cor. ii. 14.) So that according to this standard, it is not the mere natural understanding; no, nor the soundest conviction of reason, even when gathered from the scriptures themselves, untaught of God, which in relation to divine things, constitutes what the church in her first article calls 'faith in the holy Trinity.'

It is possible for a man to attain very clear head knowledge in all the distinguishing doctrines of the bible. He may, from the effects of education or study; from being brought up in habits of attending the church of England service; and learning to repeat the creeds of her prayer book; from reading or other causes, acquire a theoretic knowledge of all the great mysteries of faith. Systems of divinity, like any other system, may be learned professionally. And in this sense, there may be barristers in religion, as well as barristers in the law. And hence it is, while the one class, from the study of statutes and technicalities of the law, through

the stretch of human intellect, will split points to an hair's breadth, when the interest of his client, or his own profit and credit may be served: the other, from the same efforts of nature, will learn to argue and reason on the deep things of religion; will collate 'evidences of christianity;' solve the mysteries of the holy Trinity with as much ease as a problem in *Euclid*, and satisfy his own mind, and the minds of men of similar complexion with himself, in drawing proof from 'mathematical demonstrations,' on these points, while motives of worldly profits and worldly honours are before him. But all such systems are as foreign to divine teaching, as the study of maps to give information of the air and salubrity of a province or country, which belong only to the inhabitants to know and enjoy. That wisdom, "which maketh wise unto salvation," cannot be learnt in nature's school. And that single verse of scripture before quoted, throws to the ground every attempt to the contrary. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Nothing can rise above its source; no effect can exceed its cause. What begins in man, will never end in God. And after all that hath been said or can be said, to bring divine things to the level of human learning; the solemn truth stands where it always did: "the world by wisdom knew not God." And every attempt to disprove this doctrine of scripture must end in disappointment. This is what is called in the strong language of holy scripture, "taking the wise in their own craftiness," (Job v. 13.) And elsewhere it is said, "that the Lord frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish," (Isa. xliv. 25.)

In answering therefore those questions in the catechism, which relate to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, I shall not have said all that I wish to say, or in fact, all that I ought to say, on a subject so infinitely sublime and

important, until that I have endeavoured to impress it upon your mind, that it is not the mere acknowledgment of the Trinity which constitutes true faith in the Trinity; neither doth the clearest head knowledge, that there are three persons in the Godhead, imply, a spiritual apprehension and faith of the gracious acts of the persons. For as that man, be who he may, who merely professeth his belief, that there is a God, doth in effect virtually deny him, while he acknowledgeth not the scripture testimony of God that he exists in a trinity of persons; so equally remote from the true faith is he, who though from reasoning, and argument, admits a trinity of persons in the Godhead, yet he hath no spiritual apprehension of the grace of either upon his own soul. God the Holy Ghost, as with a sun-beam, hath marked this feature of the true faith, when declaring, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.)

I cannot close this part of my letter, in answering the questions of the catechism on the persons, and offices of the holy Trinity, without taking occasion therefrom to bless God, that *you*, my young friend, "have not so learned Christ!" You *know* the persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Others *read* of the love of God the Father; but you have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious! Many *talk* of "the blood of sprinkling;" but you are *come* to it, and found the blessed effects of it, in cleansing your guilty conscience. (Heb. xii. 24.) And while the generality of professors, rest content in the acknowledging that there is an Holy Ghost; you know him by his saving influences in your soul, for "he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (1 John xiv. 17.) Ruffinus in his History of the Council of Nice, in the fourth century, hath given a striking testimony between head knowledge and heart influence. A poor but godly man (he

saith) under the blessed impressions of *divine* teaching; silenced and confuted many a great scholar of *human* learning. One of the synod attempted to reason with him; but the poor man soon put him to silence. The scholar afterwards gave this relation of their discourse. 'Whilst he reasoned with me with words, I opposed argument; and what he said on this ground, I overthrew by the art of speaking. But when instead of reasoning, power came out of his mouth, words could no longer withstand truth; nor man resist the teaching of God.'

From the view of the first article of the church of England, as by law established, namely, 'faith in the holy Trinity;' I pass on to the consideration of the next, which in point of order followeth; namely, of the revelation which Jehovah in his Trinity of persons hath been pleased to make of himself in relation to his church and people. And this doctrine is stated in the 17th article on 'Predestination and election.'

I shall observe the same plan in my investigation of this part of the subject as the former; namely, *first* to bring forward the article; *secondly*, the scripture proofs for it; and *lastly*, the questions in the catechism, and my answers, as they appear to me proper to be given, whether they correspond or not to the sentiments of the person that framed them.

'OF PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.'

'Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according

to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

'As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things: as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil does thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

'Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy scripture: and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.'

Now let the contents of this article be analyzed, and examined, with the greatest strictness. Let it be done however with that justice and impartiality, as distinguish those, who are earnest for the discovery of truth, and not to favour the purpose of any party, or opinion. Nothing tends more to manifest the weakness of a cause, yea, and to shew, that such men at the bottom, are more than half convinced of the weakness of their cause, than when they twist, and torture words, to make them speak the very reverse, of what was origi-

nally meant. Let nothing of the kind appear upon the present occasion. Let this article be accepted, as it was written, in its own plain simple form. And if this be done, I venture to appeal to the common sense of mankind for the decision, when I say, that there never was any form of words, more clear, and palpable, than what is here said, to express the sentiments of the church of England, as by law established, on the doctrine 'of predestination and election.'

And let this view of the subject be always kept in remembrance as we go on, in the examination of the article; that our present inquiry is not whether the doctrine of predestination and election be, or be not, the truth of God; (for this will meet us hereafter when we come to examine the doctrine itself by the bible,) but the simple inquiry at present is, what saith the article on this momentous point; and what are the real, genuine, and true sentiments of the church of England, as by law established, respecting predestination and election, and as explained in her own language?

It will greatly tend to the more perfect apprehension of what this article expresseth on the subject, if we observe the same method as the church herself hath observed in framing it; and which, though not marked, under distinct heads, will be found on examination, to contain five express points, distinguished from each other, and placed in a regular order of succession. The *first* is, of predestination and election in the *cause*. The *second*, of the same in the *effects*. The *third*, of the comfort godly persons derive from the consideration of the doctrine. The *fourth*, of the sad reverse the apprehension hath, on the minds of the ungodly. And the *fifth*, the observation, that notwithstanding the different effects wrought upon different persons, the church must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy scripture.

These are the contents of the article under the several branches. I would desire to examine them, one by one.

I begin with the *first* of these, namely, of predestination and election in the *cause:* which the article expresseth in these words :—

'Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour.'

Now let this paragraph be examined through every sentence; and then let it be said, whether it be possible to have framed any form of words more plain, than what is here done, to express the sentiments of the church of England on this doctrine; namely, that predestination to life results solely from the everlasting purpose, counsel, and decree of God, unconnected with and wholly independent of any thing in man. Let it be read over a thousand times, and see if a single word can be discovered in it, which renders the sovereign act of Jehovah contingent upon any thing in the creature. There are no reserves, no limitations, nothing by way of qualifying God's purpose. The predestination of God is said to be, an everlasting act. And as "with him, there is no variableness neither shadow of turning;" so it is as certain that nothing can arise to alter his design. "He is of one mind, and who can change him?" Hence God's unchangeableness renders nothing which he hath predestinated, liable to any peradventures from the mutability of man. And what God purposed before the foundation of the world, can have no interruption from the *may be's* of time.

Moreover, this predestination is spoken of in the article as not only from the everlasting purpose, counsel,

and decree of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons; but they that are predestinated, are said to be chosen in Christ, and so chosen, as to be delivered 'from curse and damnation,' and brought by Christ to everlasting salvation, 'as vessels made to honour.' And to shew that the whole is an act of free, sovereign grace, without an eye to any thing in man; it is said, that this decree in the divine counsel was secret to us; that is, not only secret to us, in that it was decreed, before the foundations of the world, (for had that been all which was intended by the expression respecting the secrecy towards us, the remark would have been unnecessary: for how should that have been otherwise than secret to us, which not only took place before we had a being, but before all worlds?) but by being secret to us, carries with it a further idea, that as we had no hand in the purpose; so neither can the purpose depend upon any thing to be done by us, in the accomplishment. Jehovah in his trinity of persons hath indeed appointed certain events to follow his certain decrees; and no doubt the Lord hath taken effectual care, to bring about the purposes of his own will; so that the objects of his predestination to life, shall be the subjects of his grace, for the enjoyment of that life. But then, these are solely *effects*, arising out of God's predestination, and not the *cause*, no, *nor in part the cause* of it. I shall have to shew this distinction of things, between cause and effect, in due order, when I come to speak of the *second* branch of this article as proposed; namely, 'predestination in the *effects*.' In the mean time I have been now going over the several particulars of the first branch, namely, 'of predestination in the *cause*." And I do, and must contend, as one that contendeth for a plain matter of fact, that the church of England as by law established, when expressing her sentiments on predestination and election, as set forth in this first part of the article, meant the simple truth,

and the whole truth, in the open, plain, and undisguised words she hath used; and her apprehension of the doctrine is too plainly said to be misunderstood, unless by wilful perversion; that predestination and election is wholly founded in the everlasting purpose, counsel, and decree of God, independent of, and wholly unconnected with, any act in man.—How far the church of England as by law established is in unison on this point, with the scriptures of eternal truth, will be our next proposed object of inquiry. And I entreat my young friend, to whom I am addressing myself in this letter, that we may together attend to what those divine records have revealed on this subject *with reverence and godly fear.*

In bringing forward testimonies from the word of God on which are founded the great doctrines of predestination and election, the only difficulty is, from so great a mass, as both testaments of scripture furnish, where to begin, and where to end; and no less what portions to select, which may be thought more decided than the numbers left behind; which the limits of a letter like the present could not contain. The doctrine itself forms one of the highest in the charter of grace. It is indeed among the wonders of divine love, in what is called in holy scripture, "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." (1 Cor. ii. 7.) And the truth itself is as plain, and clear, when made so by divine teaching, in the word of God, as if written with a sun-beam. But to 'carnal persons lacking the Spirit of Christ,' (as the article expresses it) the *testimonies* as well as the *doctrine,* cannot but appear mysterious: not unsimilar to triangular prisms which are in themselves always the same; but manifest their beauty and colour to the view only of those who behold them when the light shines upon them.

The election of grace opens in the word of God with pointing to him who "was set up from everlasting,"

and who "is the head of his body the church, the fulness which filleth all in all!" He, the first, in point of priority; and they, the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And the Holy Ghost by his servant Paul, sweetly testifieth to this saving truth, when he saith; "for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) And in that rich cluster of those divine things concerning election, the Holy Ghost hath given the church by the same servant in his epistle to the Ephesians; he hath brought into one view, the whole purpose of his grace, in predestination, adoption, and the acceptation of the church by the Father, in Christ Jesus. "Blessed (said he) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 3—6. See also 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus i. 2. 1 Peter i. 2, &c.

And what I beg may be very particularly regarded in those, and similar scriptures of a like nature, is this, that this predestination of the church in Christ, and adoption in Christ, and acceptation in Christ; are all prior acts to the foundation of the world, and consequently before the present time-state of the church. As such, they could have no respect either to the merit, or demerit, of the church, being in "the eternal purposes of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii. 11.) Yea, it is in the person of Christ, and not the merits of Christ, the church is thus said to have been chosen, and adopted, and accepted.

For although in respect to the Adam-fall transgression, the church hath "redemption in Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace;" (Eph. i. 7.) yet the predestination of the church to "the adoption of children" by Jesus Christ, was in God's decree, before the fall, and consequently not the effect of redemption.

Nay more: for we must not stop here. The redemption of the church by Christ was not to make her his church, for that she was, and had been, "chosen in him, before the foundation of the world." And in like manner being predestinated to the adoption of children before all time; it is said that "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4.) So that the prior acts made in eternity, were confirmed indeed in time; but such confirmations could not be the *cause* but the *effect*. In like manner the gracious act of God the Holy Ghost in regeneration was not, and is not, to make us sons; for to this sonship the church was predestinated before the world. But this act of grace manifested the prior relationship. And to this amount, is the testimony of God's holy word. "And because ye are sons, (not to make us sons, but because ye are sons) God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father!" (Gal. iv. 6.)

I might amplify, by further quotations from scripture, the authority on which the church hath founded this article on predestination; but as I shall have occasion hereafter to bring forward other passages upon similar ground, I forbear at present to enlarge.

There is however one evidence more, which I wish to produce, before I quit the subject, which cannot fail to operate in due weight, according to its magnitude and importance. What if I bring before you God the

Father proclaiming election to his church, and referring to this sovereign act of his, as the highest proof of his love? Surely one should conceive, that such a witness would supersede the necessity of every other. For it could hardly be thought, that a single infidel would remain, to the doctrine of election, if God the Father be found preaching it. For who is there that acknowledgeth the Being of God, and yet rejects the testimony of God?

Here then it is! By his servant Malachi the prophet, the Lord declares this doctrine of election. "I have loved you, saith the Lord." To which the church gives answer; "wherein hast thou loved us?" And in confirmation the Lord refers to this his election. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord? Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." (Mal. i. 1, 2, 3.) What can be more decisive?

My young friend! figure to yourself a numerous congregation of the Lord's people! Imagine that the Lord was coming forth to bless them now, as he did of old by open revelation. Suppose you heard the Lord now proclaiming his love as he did then; "I have loved you, saith the Lord!" And suppose a child of God was taught to use a similar language to that of the church; and say in answer, "wherein hast thou loved us?" Should God appeal to this act of distinguishing grace as in the case of Jacob; would you, would any man, need any thing more? Would not this satisfy?

I pass on to the consideration of the *second* branch in this article, namely, of predestination and election in the *effects*. The doctrine is expressed in these words:—

'Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like

the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works: and at length by God's mercy they attain to eternal felicity.'

Such are the words of the article itself. Let us now run over very briefly one by one each particular, and then refer as before to the scriptures of God, for the church's authority.

And *first.* They are said to 'be endued with so excellent a benefit of God;' namely, what was said before being predestinated to life in the everlasting purpose of God. Observe; they are 'endued with it.' They have not procured it to themselves by any act or deserving of their own; no, nor partly so from any improvements or attainments; but 'endued with it' as the free gift of God.

Secondly. They which be so endued, are "called according to God's purpose." And that this call is altogether from God, independent of any predisposition, or preparation in them, it is immediately added, "by the Spirit working in due season." Thus again, as before, referring all both of *cause* and *effect*, into "the everlasting purpose of God."

Thirdly. The article proceeds to state the consequences which follow: namely,

'They through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.'

Let the greatest casuist analyze every particular here enumerated, and see if it be possible for him to discover an iota to be put down to man's work, or man's merit, from beginning to end.

All that the highly favoured objects of God's predestination to life are, what they are, both in the divine appointment and divine operation. They are said to

be 'endued' with so excellent a benefit; they are 'called;' they have 'the Spirit working in them; through grace' they obey the calling; their 'justification is free: they are *made* sons of God by adoption; they are made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ:' they manifest the possession of all those gifts by 'walking religiously in good works,' not to obtain those gifts, but from having received them. And to shew that all is of God, the whole is summoned up in saying, that 'at length by God's mercy,' not from their merit, nor from their good works, not from an atom of their own contributing towards it, but wholly at length 'by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.' So that he that first predestinated them to life everlasting, as the *cause*, is the same that predestinated them to these as *effects*. God himself as the Author and giver of both. And as the whole begins in grace, so by grace, the whole is consummated in glory.

Now the next inquiry is, what saith the holy scriptures by way of confirmation to this part of the article, as to the former? Will the divine records bear out in all these particulars human testimony?

In answer, I would say, that as face answereth to face, so doth the word of God very blessedly come in to the support what is here said by men. Indeed many of the scriptures are so direct to the point, and are so much like the very words made use of by those men of blessed memory which drew up this article; that it should seem they had the bible of God before them, as they wrote the several sentences, and framed them upon this divine model.

Let us just glance at the article once more in what hath been reviewed, and observe how beautifully the several expressions harmonize with God's word.

They that be endued with so excellent a benefit, (saith the article on predestination to life) are said "to

be called according to God's purpose." And what saith the scriptures on the same subject? "Who hath saved us, (saith Paul) and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) And Jude to the same amount declares the church to have been "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ and called," Jude 1. And Paul speaking of the same distinguishing grace, and the call of God to his people, declares, that God "had from the beginning chosen the church to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he had called them by his gospel." (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

But the article proceeds to state, that being called according to God's purpose, 'the Spirit is working in them in due season.' And to the same amount is the scripture. It is God "which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12.) And elsewhere this indwelling and working of the Spirit is declared to be the *critera* of their spiritual life and character. "For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." But on the contrary, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 9—11.)

Neither is this all. For they that are so blessed with the predestination to life, and are the called according to God's purpose, are said by the article, 'through grace to obey the calling.' And what saith the word of God to this amount? "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." (Psalm cx. 3.) Hence it is said of Abraham, when "called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither

he went," Heb. xi. 8. And it was the same divine working in the mind through grace, which made the men at Antioch attend to Paul's preaching, while the graceless contradicted and blasphemed; for it is said that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Acts xiii. 45—48.

Neither do the scriptures cease to give their sanction to the article in what follows, to their being called. 'They are justified freely.' Which are the very words the divine record hath made use of on the same subject ages before. "Being justified freely (saith the Holy Ghost by Paul) by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii. 24. See also Acts xiii. 38, 39.

They are said by the article to be 'made sons of God by adoption.' And doth not the scripture say the same? "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." 'They are made,' saith the article, 'like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ.' And wherein doth this differ from the scripture which saith, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29. See also Col. iii. 9, 10. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

Neither doth the beautiful correspondence on those interesting points, between the scriptures and the article end here. The one saith, 'they that be endued with so excellent a benefit as predestination to life, walk religiously in good works.' And the other saith, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. See also 2 Pet. i. 3, 4.

And lastly, to add no more. As the article closeth in, in that part we are now noticing, with saying, 'that at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting

felicity;' who that hears those expressions, but must consider them as an echo to those divine declarations of scripture, where it is said, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Titus iii. 5, 6, 7. See also Eph. ii. 8, 9.

So that both in the first and original cause, and in the ultimate and final end, predestination to life in God's eternal purpose; and predestination to all the necessary effects for the accomplishment of that purpose; the whole are the result of God's free gift. All which is very beautifully as well as very blessedly expressed in that compendium of the subject given by the Holy Ghost to the church in that scripture where it is said, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 29, 30.

I have now finished all that I conceive to be necessary in examining the several parts of the article, in the second branch of it, in relation to what the article itself contains of predestination in its effects, as the former referred to predestination in its cause. And I have endeavoured also, in as brief a manner as the nature of the subject would admit, to shew the analogy of holy scripture with the doctrine of the church on those grand points. I now hasten to the examination of the third branch in the same article as was proposed, and by the same standard; namely,

'Of the godly consideration of predestination and

our election in Christ being full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons.'

But here my labours will be bounded within a very narrow compass. The doctrine once admitted, and becoming a living principle in the soul, can be no other than a source of "joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Let the words of the article on this point be duly considered, and there can need nothing more in confirmation of what is said. The godly consideration of those divine truths by godly persons, and they are described: 'such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ.' And observe yet further, 'mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members.' Thus defining who they are, and how they are known. All which is expressed in nearly the very words of scripture: "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," (Gal. v. 24.) And elsewhere it is said, that "through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body and live," (Rom. viii. 13.) And the article adds, that not only 'by the working of the Spirit of Christ, they mortify the works of the flesh and their earthly members; but by the same Almighty power, their minds are drawn to high and heavenly things.' And what saith the scripture to the same amount? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," (Coloss. iii. 1—4.) All which are effects of God's predestination to life, which is the cause. And well therefore may the godly consideration of it with godly persons be full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort! The Son of God himself declared that this record of the names of his people in heaven, be-

comes cause of greater joy, than the devils being subject to them through his name, Luke x. 17—20. It is this which preserves the Lord's people "from worshipping the beast," (Rev. xiii. 8.) And this also "from everlasting death," (Rev. xx. 11.) And how can the godly do otherwise than rejoice, to whose spirits "the Spirit itself beareth witness that they are the children of God?" (Rom. viii. 16.)

On the contrary, as the article proceeds to say in what may be called the fourth branch of it: 'for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination:' must be indeed a sad reverse from what distinguisheth the joy and happiness of the Lord's chosen ones. But let their characters as the article hath described them be considered; and let the word of God, on which the article is founded, be examined with them; and there will be seen here, as in all the former comparisons, a full coincidence and agreement. Curious and carnal persons lacking the Spirit; curious and untaught of God, presuming to be wise above what is written, and desiring to make divine truths bend to human decision. Peter saith that there were such in his day, and we know that there are many in ours, who reading Paul's epistles, "in which there are some things hard to be understood; they that are unlearned, (lacking the Spirit,) and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction," (2 Pet. iii. 16.) And the carnal are uniformly spoken of in scripture, as incapable of understanding or even receiving divine truths; "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," (Rom. viii. 7, 8.)

But what saith the article in the *fifth* and last clause on predestination? 'We must receive God's promises in such wise as they be set forth to us in holy scripture.'

And what correspondence to this do we find in the word of God? "ye shall not add unto the word which I command you; neither shall ye diminish aught from it," (Deut. iv. 2.) God's truth must be proclaimed, be the consequence what it may; "let God be true, but every man a liar!" (Rom. iii. 4.) And in relation to the offence which 'curious and carnal men lacking the Spirit take at it:' here is our authority, "and thou son of man be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words; though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions, be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious," (Ezek. ii. 6, 7.)

So much may suffice, both for the examination of this article of the church of England, as by law established, and also of the authority on which the church hath founded the article in the scriptures of eternal truth. Prosecuting the same plan which I originally proposed to myself in the opening of this letter, and which I endeavoured to observe in the former part of it, namely, after examining the first article, and then the proofs of it from holy scripture; I gave in my answers to the several questions in this catechism as referring to that subject: I now proceed to do the same by the questions framed on this seventeenth article of the church also, in the order in which they are placed, and as they are now before me.

Question 1.—'Does not the seventeenth article enumerate various qualities as belonging to those persons who are predestinated to eternal life?'

Answer.—Certainly not, as predisposing causes, or in part predisposing causes, inclining the divine mind to form God's everlasting purpose, in the predestination to life. It would have been a curious specimen of incon-

sistency, had the reformers so committed themselves. The 13th article declares, that

'Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or, (as the school authors say,) deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not, but they have the nature of sin.'

And that the scriptures of God give countenance to no such opinion is most decided. For if the man who proposeth this question can find a single passage in the whole book of God, from Genesis to Revelations, where the everlasting purpose of God in predestination to life, is made to depend upon any one good act to be done, or any one good quality to be found in the objects of this divine love, let him produce it. The word of God confronts the attempt, when referring in point to the history of Esau and Jacob, in confirmation that man hath no hand, neither bears any part either before or after, in God's purpose of election. For thus speaks the Holy Ghost by Paul, "for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand; not of works but of him that calleth; it was said that the elder should serve the younger. As it is witten, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," (Rom. ix. 11–13.) And to put an everlasting negative to all the presumptuous reasonings of the human mind, which from age to age have sprung up on this subject; the same Almighty God declared by his servant the apostle, the cause, the one only cause of this his divine decree, by referring the whole into his own sovereign will and pleasure; "there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if it be of grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be

of works, then is it no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work," (Rom. xi. 5, 6.)

If these answers be not conclusive, there is an end of all conviction. For men among mere reasoners only, that can resist the word of God in a case so plain and palpable; "neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

It would be well however, for all of this complexion who would make the predilection of God, in his eternal purposes concerning his church and people, to rest upon some foreseen good of various qualities beheld in them, to learn first how this matter stands in the history of the Lord's chosen ones through the whole bible. The Lord commanded Moses to tell Israel, that the Lord's choice of them was not for any thing good in them, for they were a stiff-necked people, but the sole cause was, "because the Lord loved them, and because the Lord chose their fathers before them," (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) And as if in direct contradiction to the *postulatum* of our catechist, the Lord declared by his servant the prophet Isaiah, that the Lord knew that Israel would be obstinate, and his neck be as an iron sinew, and his brow brass. "I have even, (saith the Lord,) from the beginning declared unto thee; before it came to pass I shewed thee, lest thou should say mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them." And the Lord adds, "yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb!" And after this portrait, as if to make a renewed proclamation of the Lord's distinguishing grace in his predestination to eternal life, the Lord assigns this as the sole cause. "For mine name sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off." And again, "for mine own sake, even for mine

own sake will I do it, for how should my name be polluted; and I will not give my glory to another," (Isa. xlviii. 1—11. Nay more than all these, the Lord by his servant Ezekiel declared that Jerusalem had "changed his judgments into wickedness more than the nations around her," (chap. v. 5, 6.) And in a following chapter the Lord thus speaks: "As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins, but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they," (Ezekiel xvi. 48—52.) Can any man in the face of these and the like scriptures, talk of various qualities belonging to those persons who are predestinated to eternal life, as if predisposing the Lord to that election? If I were to assume the office of the catechist, and in my turn propose a question, it should be for the man that would thus persuade, to shew what good qualities were in Paul, when the Lord first called him by sovereign grace. The apostle saith himself that he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; yea, the chief of sinners," (1 Timothy i. 13—15.) And the Lord gave his testimony of him concerning his predestination to life; when he sent Ananias to comfort him, "Lord, (said the poor timid Ananias,) I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.—Go thy way, (saith the Lord,) for he is a chosen vessel unto me," (Acts ix. 13—15.) And when the catechist hath shewn what good qualities they were for which Paul was predestinated to life; let him say also what were found of the same kind in the dying thief on the cross, whom the Lord Jesus took with him to paradise. (Luke xxiii. 39—43.)

Question 2.—'Is it not one of those qualities that they walk religiously in good works?'

Answer.—If the question had been, is it not one of the *fruits* and *effects* of 'predestination to life,' that

they walk religiously in good works, when called by sovereign grace to the knowledge and enjoyment of it; the answer would have been direct; and I should have said, most certainly yes! Yea, the article itself hath already declared as much, when it said, that 'they which be endued with such an excellent benefit of God, do (among other blessed evidences of their high calling) walk religiously in good works.' And the word of God in numberless parts most blessedly giveth testimony to the same. But if the catechist by the question, means to intimate that God's choice in 'predestination to life, was made, from his foreknowledge of various qualities of good, in the objects of his distinguishing grace; and that this operated in the divine mind to make that choice; to this statement of the question I most unequivocally say, no! and I enter my warmest protest against such a tenet as wholly unscriptural. What was said in answer to the foregoing question will be equally suited here. And I venture to assert that the proposer of this question on this ground, cannot find a single spot in the word of God to put his foot upon, for framing such an hypothesis.

Question 3.—'Is not therefore the walking religiously in good works, a criterion by which they who are predestinated to eternal life may be distinguished from those who are not so predestinated?'

Answer.—Here our catechist hath indirectly admitted, whether he designed it or not, that there are 'those who are not predestinated to eternal life;' and consequently he hath by so much, however unintentionally, given in to the doctrine of election, that there are others who are. And in relation to the question itself, of good works being a *criteria* by which they who are predestinated to eternal life may be known; the answer is direct. Good works, when the production of grace in the soul, are sure marks, by which the truly regenerated child of God is discovered from the carnal and profane.

But still, all the good works of all the saints of God, are but *fruits* and *effects* of predestination to eternal life. They have not the smallest influence in directing the Lord's eternal choice of his people; neither do they become the smallest cause with the Lord, for the acceptation of his people. It is "to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," Ephes. i. 6. Hence, the word of God comes in with a fulness of decision to establish and confirm the article in all its bearings on this point; and at the same time to silence all attempts to reply. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." And the scripture doth not rest here. For by way of further confirmation that not only the original and eternal predestination to life is all of grace; and that it is 'at length by God's *mercy*,' not man's *merit*, the highly favoured objects of this grace in election 'attain everlasting felicity,' but the very good works themselves, which from 'being endued with so excellent a gift of God,' they are enabled to walk in, are declared to be the immediate result of God's predestinating purpose. For thus the scripture goeth on to shew. "For we are," saith the apostle, (speaking of the regenerated church of God in Christ,) "we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," (Ephes. ii. 8, 9, 10.) So that in fact 'the predestination to life,' and 'the ordination to good works,' are equally both in the everlasting purpose and appointment of God; and are independent of, and unconnected with, any merit in man.

Question 4.—'Does not our Saviour declare that we shall be known by our works as a tree is known by its fruits?'

Answer.—Very blessedly hath our Lord declared this great truth; and a better standard for the decision of

character cannot be found. But wherefore did not our catechist, when he referred to those words of our Lord, include the whole of what our Lord hath said upon this occasion? Had he done this, he would have superseded the necessity of my answer, for it answers itself.

The Son of God was teaching his disciples how to discern false teachers. And he refers to their actions rather than their words, by way of ascertaining their real character. "Beware of false prophets, (saith the Lord,) which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits? Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them," (Matt. vii. 15–21.)

Now let any man make application of what our adorable Lord hath here said to the doctrine before us; and it will appear that no form of words could have been more happily chosen to illustrate the doctrine of predestination to life, which the article asserts, and which the scriptures of God confirm. Predestination to life is said in both, to produce all its own blessed effects. They who are thus predestinated, are said 'to be endued with so excellent a benefit of God,' that 'they are called according to God's purpose,' and 'by his Spirit working in them, they obey the call,' they are made sons: 'they are made like the image of the only begotten Son of God,' and 'they walk religiously in good works.' Yea, the scripture adds, that "they are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," (Ephes. ii. 10.) Here then both cause and effect are discovered, and both found to correspond. "Make

the tree good, (saith the Lord Jesus upon another occasion,) and his fruit good," (Matt. xii. 33.) So that to adopt our Lord's own figure, they who are predestinated to eternal life, like trees of the Lord's own planting, are made good, and their fruit good. And as by predestination they are chosen to be holy; so by regeneration they are planted in an holy soil, and which the Lord hath blessed, and will bless. They are gathered from the world's wide wilderness, and are brought into Christ's garden, the church; and the Lord causeth the rain, and the dew of heaven, and the clouds to drop their fatness, and the sun to shed all his sweet influences upon them; and how shall they otherwise be found than bringing forth fruit unto God, "some thirty fold, some sixty fold, and some an hundred!"

Question 5.—'Does not St. Peter declare that we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God unto obedience?'

Answer.—It were well in all men asking questions and quoting scripture, to countenance such questions, to quote the scripture fairly, and as it is. The apostle Peter in addressing the church of God, calls the church, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," (1 Peter i. 2.) And the whole forms a beautiful compendium of the several persons of the Godhead in their special acts of grace to the church. Here is first the election of God the Father; then the sanctification of God the Spirit; and then the two great branches of God the Son's personal work in the economy of grace, his obedience, and the sprinkling of his blood; for the accomplishment of the salvation of his people. But what have these acts of sovereign grace to do with the obedience of the church? The words will not admit of this construction. They are express in their application to each person in the Godhead. Election is not

more ascribed personally to the Father; neither sanctification to the Spirit, than obedience, as well as sprinkling, both equally are, to the Lord Jesus Christ? And can any man conceive that our obedience is the obedience the apostle meant? Would an inspired apostle in the midst of such immense things, in the great system of grace, which form those high and distinguishing points in doctrine, of the holy persons in the Godhead, introduce any thing in reference to the obedience of the mere creature? This question therefore of our catechist is foreign to the subject. The whole verse of the apostle is ascribing equal glory and praise to Jehovah in his trinity of persons for those equal acts of grace, by which each person is made known to the church. And the apostle closeth the same in a benediction from each and all, which if the obedience spoken of referred to the church, and not to Christ, as the head of the church, would be inadmissible. For after having enumerated the acts of the Holy Three, the apostle adds: "grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."

Question 6.—'Is it not, therefore, a contradiction both to scripture and to the seventeenth article, to assert that the decrees of God are absolute, or that election on the part of God, has no reference to foreseen good conduct on the part of man?'

Answer.—It is admirable to observe the acuteness of the human mind. A man raiseth a superstructure upon false principles, and then proceeds to act upon the same as if founded upon solid ground. The article from beginning to end sheweth that election is in the everlasting purpose of God. And having laid this down as a maxim perfectly incontrovertible, the *effects* arising from this *cause* are said, as might have been expected, to be in perfect conformity to the same. Our catechist, inverting the order of things, wisheth to have it said, that God foreseeing certain good qualities on the part of men, formed his plan of predestination accordingly, and

was guided more by what men would merit, than by what God had appointed. So that in the very moment the article declares, and the word of God confirms the same, that it is all of grace, and that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, and not of works lest any man should boast," (Eph. ii. 8, 9,) this writer limits the Holy One of Israel, and saith that not free grace, but some foreseen good in the object of divine favour became the predisposing cause of this predilection. Under impressions like these he vauntingly puts the question: 'Is it not a contradiction, both to scripture and the seventeenth article to assert, that the decrees of God are absolute, and that God had no reference to some foreseen good conduct on the part of man?' If God hath contradicted himself let our catechist shew it. For my own part having answered this most amply in the replies made to the former questions, I think it needless to go over the ground again, but rather refer to what is there stated to the former questions of a similar nature.

Question 7.—'If we believe that in respect to a future state, neither our good conduct can excite any reasonable hope, nor our bad conduct any reasonable fear; is there any thing beyond the dread of temporal punishment to deter us from the commission of crimes?'

Answer.—Who saith this of our belief? Not the seventeenth article of the church of England on election and predestination; not the word of God. Not the truly regenerated whom God hath "made willing in the day of his power." For all these with one voice give in their suffrage to a very different doctrine. The article, as hath been shewn, most plainly sets forth that the predestinated unto life, 'be endued with so excellent a benefit of God:' they are called by grace, they are made sons of God by adoption; and walk religiously in good works; and thereby manifest whose they are and

to whom they belong. And the word of God no less declares, that by regeneration, they who are predestinated unto life, have "all things given unto them which pertain unto life and godliness, being made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," (2 Pet. i. 4, 5.) Yea, further, the Lord hath undertaken both for himself and for his people. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, (saith the Lord,) I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me," (Jer. xxxii. 40.) When therefore the catechist proposeth this question, 'Is there any thing beyond the dread of temporal punishment to deter us from the commission of crimes?' here is the answer which every regenerated child of God predestinated to life, (and it is of such only the article here speaks,) hath to make; God hath undertaken both for himself and his people. I will not turn from them, and I will put my fear in their hearts, they shall not depart from me. I will not, and they shall not. It behoves the man who calls in question this security, to shew what barrier is further necessary to deter from the commission of crimes.

Question 8.—'Is not the law of God, which when rightly understood affords additional sanction to the law of man, so perverted by such a belief, as to become the means of counteracting the law of man?'

Answer.—Every law of man if rightly formed, must be founded on the law of God; and all human laws derive their chief sanction when thus constructed from the divine. But what belief is this that would pervert the law of man, and take shelter for so doing from the law of God? Our catechist, assuming for granted what the article never warranted, leaps at once at a conclusion from ungrounded premises, and acts upon it. I have shewn before, in my answer to the preceding question, that this belief hath no existence but in the

imagination; being repudiated by the article, by the word of God, and by every truly regenerated believer. And to every child of God whom the Lord hath 'predestinated to life,' as hath been already observed, and shewn again and again; there is given grace, so that the law of God and the law of man are both in the delight and practice of the Lord's people. See Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. with Heb. viii. 8; Ezek. xxxvi. 24—27; Psm. cxix. 97.

Question 9.—'Is not such a belief injurious also to the individual as well as to society at large, by exciting ungrounded hopes in the confident hypocrite, and driving most virtue to despair?'

Answer.—Still harping upon this string of a belief, which is wholly foreign to the subject, and drawing conclusions from false premises: in this and the two preceding questions, we have lost sight of the article on which this catechism is supposed to be founded altogether: and are led off the ground into a region of fancy. In making reply, therefore, I must beg to call back the catechist to the subject of our original inquiry, namely, of the doctrine of the seventeenth article of the church of England, as by law established, on predestination and election. And this article, upon which by the profession made at the opening of the catechism thereon, we are led to suppose the catechist is framing his questions, teacheth that 'predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God;' and that, 'they which be endued with so excellent a benefit,' are 'called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season;' and 'walk religiously in good works,' &c. What hath the hypocrite to do with such things? How can a man chosen of God from everlasting, and in whom 'the Spirit is working,' be found among characters of this description? What hypocrite ever felt the blessed fruits and effects which the article enumerates as the consequence of God's predestination to life? And in respect to such persons as this question speaks of, in

'driving most virtue to despair,' what virtue, or what *most* virtue the catechist seems to be apprehensive may be driven to despair is not easy to imagine; for according to holy scripture, the whole world of carnal unregenerate men lieth in wickedness, (1 John v. 19,) and until quickened into a new and spiritual life in Christ, the predestinated to life, as well as the whole world, are alike dead in trespasses and sins, (Eph. ii. 1.)

It is to be lamented, that to the want of a proper discrimination on subjects of this nature, many erroneous opinions have arisen. And some have gone so far, as to charge the doctrine of predestination with having a tendency to licentiousness. But this charge in reality is not against the predestinated, but against Him who predestinates. That there are persons in our day, as there have been in the apostle's days, and every age of the church, who have "the form but deny the power of godliness," there can be no question: but what are such things to the doctrine itself? The article hath very plainly shewn, and the same is confirmed in scripture, that the predestinated to life, testify their high 'calling,' and 'feel in themselves' the working of the Spirit of Christ mortifying 'the works of the flesh and their earthly members,' and 'drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things.' Of what consequence is it, that a contrary character is in the world? Will any venture to call in question God's truths on this account? Do men do so in common life? Is the real gold disesteemed, because there is tinsel; or what is known to be genuine, denied because there are counterfeits?

The advocates of God's truth contend, as they are fully justified by the scriptures of God to contend, that the doctrine of 'predestination to life' is among the distinguishing truths of the bible. And they challenge the whole world to produce any among the Lord's predestinated family, who from 'being endued with so excellent a benefit of God,' as the article expresseth it,

when 'called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season,' but what adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Let a man look round in every place, family, or neighbourhood; let him examine their conduct with an eagle eye, in all the relative connections of life; as fathers, husbands, wives, children, masters, servants, and then say whether they are not "examples of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," (1 Tim. iv. 12.) Their principles render it impossible to be otherwise! Predestinated, (as the article expresseth it,) to life in the everlasting purpose of God before the foundations of the world, and 'called in due season,' by regeneration in this time-state of the church; they are upheld by sovereign grace, and "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," (1 Pet. i. 5.) Hence their daily walk and conversation is framed upon the principles of that model laid down by the apostle: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things!" (Phil. iv. 8.)

So much in answer to the *nine* first questions in this catechism, according to the order in which they stand under the article of the church on predestination and election. And though the *four* last of those *nine*, are but little in connection with the article itself; being more founded on the reason of men, than the revelation of God; yet I have waded through them, taking my stand on scripture ground, and framing my answers to them according to the standard of the divine word.

But there are three questions yet remaining to be noticed in this chapter, over which I pause; or rather from which I beg to retire. They appear to me as not suited to the province of man to examine; much less to answer, or give in any judgment upon before God. I

shall therefore simply recite them as they are in this catechism; and then place against them what appears to me to be best suited to them in the word of God.

Question 10.—'Though the Creator is not accountable to the creature, and his will alone determines who shall be elected to eternal life, is it credible that a Being of infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness, should elect on any other principles than such as are consistent with those attributes?

Answer.—"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job xxxviii. 2.)

"Every one that cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me, I the Lord will answer him by myself." (Ezek. xiv.)

Question 11.—'And does not absolute, or indiscriminate election annul the distinction of good and evil; of virtue and vice?'

Answer.—"When Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of good works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion: so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth: therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth!"

"Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"

"Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God willing to shew his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?" (Rom. ix. 10—23.)

Question 12.—'Is therefore such election possible on the part of a Being who is infinitely wise, just, and good?'

Answer.—"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it!" (Job xl. 2.)

"The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Prov. xvi. 4.)

"With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his." (Job xii. 16.)

"Behold! he taketh away, who can hinder him: who will say unto him, what doest thou? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him. Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge. If I had called and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life." (Job ix. 12—21.)

I cannot close in this part of my subject on predesti-

nation and election, without expressing a becoming surprise at the ungoverned resentment, which the world, more or less, manifest to this doctrine. Is it not strange, that men, who in all they do, or say, profess to be guided by their own free will and pleasure; yet at the same time presume to withhold that freedom from the Holy One of Israel? They are ready to contend for every privilege they call their own; and in the same moment they do so, are disposed to be querilous, and call in question the Lord of heaven and earth, for the exercise of his sovereignty? Was it ever known, that any man who found himself the object of the king's favour, called in question the justice of the choice, when his majesty issued the *conge d'elire* for his election to a bishoprick? But if the King of kings vouchsafeth his grace in a way of distinction to one rather than another; the mind swells indignantly at the ordination: and the question bursts forth in words not unlike those in the catechism; 'does not absolute or indiscriminate election, annul the distinction of good and evil; of virtue and vice!'

But though such things move in our atmosphere, they ascend no higher. The doctrine of election stands where it hath always stood from everlasting in the divine counsel; and is no more obstructed in its operation by the daring opinions of carnal men, than the serenity of the heavens, by the clouds which pass beneath them over our earth. The presumptuous reasonings of the human mind have in all ages of the church, come forward against the doctrine of election; and every thing hath been said that can be said against it. However men amuse themselves with fancying that they are wiser than their fathers, and have found out new arguments, which none ever used before; there is nothing novel in any of them. They take the same stand, and go over the same ground, thousands before have gone, and, as the scripture very emphati-

cally represents it, "weary themselves for very vanity." (Habuk. ii. 13.) But when the present generation of this class shall have passed away, as their fathers did before them, the truth is found where it always was found; and that precious scripture comes forth to the comfort of the faithful; "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

As for you, my dear young friend, it is your mercy to say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed." God the Father hath witnessed, as he testified by his servant the prophet, that his love to his church hath been shewn by election. (Malachi i. 1—23.) God the Son hath declared also that his coming at the last day will be to confirm the same. He saith himself, "that he will send his angels and gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven." (Mark xiii. 26, 27.) And no less God the Holy Ghost hath given his earnest to the whole election of grace, in having "called them with an holy calling; and sealed them unto the day of redemption." Well may you and all like you, join in the apostle's hymn, and say as he did; "but we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he hath called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

Having led you through the examination of the first and second great doctrines in the articles of the church of England, as by law established, namely, 'of faith in the holy Trinity,' and 'of predestination and election;' I proceed now to the third, which in point of priority, next demands attention; namely, 'of original or birth sin.' In the prosecution of which, I

shall adopt the same plan as I have hitherto done; namely, first, bring forward the article itself; secondly, the scripture authority for the same; and lastly, give in my answers to the several questions framed thereon in this catechism. And first for the article.

'OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN.'

'Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit: and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain; yea, in them that are regenerated: whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, φρόνημα σαρκος, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.'

It is a subject of much satisfaction to my mind, that so very plain and obvious are the words used by the reformers of blessed memory, in this, as well as in the former articles, which have been reviewed, as to supersede the necessity of any long comment. Never surely can language be stronger, in order to convey a plain matter of fact than what is here used. For if 'original or birth sin be such as is here stated, that 'in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation;' nothing can more decidedly shew the total state of human depravity, which in one sweeping clause denounceth the whole race, without the exception of a single person, to be alike involved in the same ruin.

Hence, it must undeniably follow, that it is the nature of man itself, which in this fallen state is exposed to the just judgment of God. It is not any particular act of sin in one man more than in another, which becomes the original cause of this condemnation, but the whole are equally involved, which proves that the general, yea the universal stamina is the same in all. For though the fruits and effects of sin, like diseases in the body, may not appear with equal violence in all: yet all are *ejusdem naturæ*, and if all were placed in like circumstances, would be alike in conduct. Restraints of grace, as in the instance of Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6; and in thousands beside; the absence of temptation, and a long *et cæteræ* of predisposing causes, may give a diversity of appearance in human actions: yet the nature in all is the same. The tiger is still the tiger, however chained. By the fall there is a total dereliction of man from God. And whether this alienation, manifests itself in words or deeds; whether sleeping or waking, it is the nature which is corrupt; and which like a poisoned fountain, contains more of the venom than all the streams which it sends forth. The article therefore hath expressed this original or birth sin in its proper colours, when describing it 'as the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.'

But we must not stop here. Happily for my present argument, the article not only thus clearly states the doctrine of 'original or birth sin,' but by shewing the folly of the 'pelagian heresy,' hath as fully demonstrated also the real cause of this universal corruption of our nature, and traced it to its source. A few words will throw light upon this subject.

The pelagians, (so called from Pelagius, their leader, an heretic among the several genera which sprung up and infested the church in the early ages, after the empire made open profession of christianity,) attempted to upset the doctrine of original sin, by asserting, that

the corruption of our nature, arose not from any inherent or entailed malady, or from generation; but from following the sin of Adam, as children resemble their parents by example and imitation. Thus this arch heretic, and his followers, attempted by one stroke to do away both original sin, in all its federal effects, and in all its natural consequences. Hence the article in direct opposition to this pelagian perversion of truth, traceth 'original or birth sin' to its source; and declares that man is in his own nature inclined to evil; so that in himself, 'the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore (here is the cause) in every person born into this world, it dserveth God's wrath and damnation.'

We shall see how far the church of England is justified in this statement, by the scriptures of truth, when we come to that part proposed under the second branch of the subject, namely, to examine the article, by this infallible and unerring standard. But in the meantime it will not be amiss to cut up by the root this baleful weed of the pelagian heresy, which like the groundsel of the earth, meets with too suited a culture in the hot bed of the human heart in complimenting our pride at the expence of God's truth, in asserting that original sin is not the corruption of our nature in following Adam by inherency, or entailment, but by imitation.

Now 'original or birth sin,' is induced in every son and daughter of Adam, not only from physical, or natural causes, for that the nature we derive from him by generation is sinful; and as such we also are sinful according to the old adage, *simile generat simile:* but because Adam, in all he was, and all he did, acted as the head and representative of his posterity; and therefore, what he was, and what he did, virtually all his seed was, and all his seed did in him. Similar to what is said of Levi: that he was in the loins of his father

Abraham when Melchizedec met him, and blessed him: that is, Levi was then to all intents and purposes part of himself, and included in the blessing. (Compare Gen. xiv. 18, 19. with Heb. vii. 1—10.) In like manner the whole of Adam's posterity, were in the loins of Adam, part of himself, and considered as such; when he transgressed the commands of God all transgressed with him. For neither Adam, nor Abraham, acted as private persons, but as public heads; so that in all that concerned both in this public capacity, concerned their seed. Thus, the blessing (as it is emphatically called) given to Abraham, was not limited personally to that patriarch; so neither the transgression committed by Adam had reference to him only. (See Gal. iii. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 20.) This is a fair comparative statement of the doctrine according to the analogy of scripture. And hence the sense, and meaning of the article, on 'original or birth sin,' is most obvious; when it is said, 'that it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.'

And although it is no less true, that had we not all derived our fallen, sinful, and corrupt nature, from Adam by generation, that is, in other words, had we not sprung from his stock, and had not his blood flowed through our veins, we should not have been implicated either in his guilt, or his punishment; but then in this case, we should not have been of the same nature, neither would he have been our head and first father: but being so, we too sadly prove, both by heritage and generation, that we are his own by nature, and belong to that fallen, degraded, and sinful family, of whom it is too truly said, "that there is none good, no, not one." (Rom. iii. 10.)

And we find this doctrine of our condition by nature both from inheritance, and by generation, very fully illustrated in the history of all mankind, and traced to

its source in the scriptures of eternal truth. The apostle to the Romans, taught by the Holy Ghost, states it very circumstantially in the fifth chapter of that epistle, when explaining the cause of universal death. "Wherefore (saith he) as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) Pray observe the expression; "all have sinned." The apostle doth not say, that all are made sinful; which would have been the proper expression, if the evil produced to the posterity of Adam had been only from the effect of generation, and the being born from a sinful parent, producing a sinful likeness; but the apostle saith, "all have sinned:" thereby declaring as plain as words can express it, that in that original sin of the first man, all his posterity were included by inheritance. For the whole race of man were all virtually in him, represented by him, and connected with him in all that he did, either of good or evil. So that on the presumption he had stood upright, as God made him, his children would have been upright. But when he fell, they fell; and he pulled down the whole judgment of God upon himself and his posterity. And hence the justness of the apostle's expression, "all have sinned." And hence the conclusion of the article, 'that in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation!'

But we must not stop here. The Holy Ghost by the apostle proceeds in the same scripture, to illustrate the doctrine yet further. He saith, "for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (verse 13.) Until the law! He means the law given by Moses. For until this law, there was a law prior to it, even that law given to Adam in the garden, the breach of which God declared to be death. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 17.) Hence, what the Holy Ghost de-

clared by Paul is fully confirmed; "sin was in the world:" and this law had been broken by Adam, which made it so: otherwise sin could not have been imputed. So that by the imputation of sin, this law was confirmed. And as Adam stood the public head of all his children, all his posterity was involved both in his transgression, and in his punishment: "death passed upon all men;" not simply because all men are sinful by generation, but because in the great representative of his family when the first parent sinned; "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

And yet further to illustrate and render plain a doctrine so infinitely important to be known by the church of God, the Holy Ghost by his same servant the apostle, proceeds to explain this doctrine of entailed guilt, inducing the consequent punishment of entailed death, in cases where no other cause whatever could operate to induce such effects. He brings forward the example of infants, whose death taking place before they possessed the possibility of committing any actual transgression, could be explained by no other law, than their being implicated in original sin. "Nevertheless, (saith the apostle) death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." (Rom. v. 14.) And when we see, as that may be seen, in all ages from the fall of man, to the present hour, infants just born, and shortly after expiring in agonies; where there has been no possibility of committing any actual transgression; surely here the doctrine of original sin is as loudly proclaimed, as if a thousand voices stood by, at each death, to make known the cause. Very gracious therefore was it in God the Holy Ghost thus to explain it. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." The similitude of their sin, carried no resemblance to Adam's; his was actual—their's original.

Nevertheless all equally involved, because in the first sin of the father, the whole seed was implicated. And hence death passed upon all men, because "all have sinned."

I will detain you with only one observation more, upon the doctrine contained in this article, before that I proceed to bring before you as proposed, the scripture authority on which the whole of this article on original or birth sin is founded; and that is, to call your attention to what the article hath stated in the close of it, respecting the persons who are regenerated; concerning whom it is said, 'that in them this infection of nature doth remain; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, φρονημα σαρκος, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh; is not subject to the law of God. And how very fully this is proved in the history of every truly regenerated child of God; all that are acquainted with the plague of their own heart, daily testify to their sorrow!' The Holy Ghost hath given his assurance to the same, when declaring by the apostle; "for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.)

These are paradoxes to men of the world; and so the Lord hath taught his people to expect. For the "carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," (Rom. viii. 7.) but he that is brought by divine teaching to know and feel the plague of his own heart, feels what Paul felt, and is prompted often to say as Paul said: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this

death! I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom. vii. 22, &c.)

I come now, as was proposed, under the *second* branch, to look into the scriptures of God for the authority on which this article of the church is founded, from whence she draws her confidence in relation to original or birth sin.

And here we need only open the bible, whether in the old testament or the new, to find the sad truth staring us in the face in every part; all with one voice proclaiming, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." So early as the sixth chapter of Genesis, we find the Holy Ghost thus speaking of the universal apostacy of man by the fall. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," (Gen. vi. 5.) And in the after days of David, we read of a survey which the Lord then took of mankind, the result of which was to the same amount. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God. But they are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one," (Psm. xiv. 2, 3.)

And in the days of the apostle Paul, the Holy Ghost by his ministry gave the church a comment upon the words by David, enlarged upon the same with many additional aggravations of character, and then made this solemn conclusion from the whole. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God," (Rom. iii. 10—19.)

In the same epistle to the Romans, we have the portrait of human nature in its degeneracy drawn at full length, (and yet numberless features not brought forward,) in which the universal depravity of men is so

sketched as is enough to make the heart of every one who looks at it to melt at the sight. And when he contemplates in it himself, as he is by nature, and that what he beholds there he finds within, the subject is affecting indeed. Without running over the whole chapter, which more or less is full of the melancholy description, it will be enough to begin at that part where the Holy Ghost saith, that "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them," (Rom. i. 25, to end.)

Here we have the picture of our fallen state drawn from life, and by a pencil that cannot but be correct. We see it in its original, and we see it in its actual form; the root is in all. The fruit in its ten thousand diversified productions. But the whole corresponding to what Job saith: "man drinketh iniquity like water," (Job xv. 16.)

Neither do the scriptures give over with this statement. The word of God describes our better things, as partaking in the mass of evil; that even the appearance of what is comparatively speaking in itself good, yet coming from a nature that is in itself evil; it brings with it a tinge from passing through such a channel: like waters, however pure in themselves, yet passing over *strata* foul and corrupt, come forth impregnated with the same. Hence the most holy things of men

as they are in themselves, they are corrupt before God. So the church complains: "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses as filthy rags," (Isa. lxiv. 6.) Observe, not our unrighteousness but our righteousness; and not our offerings, but our persons. And hence it was in the Jewish church, the high priest as typical of Christ, wore on his mitre, *holiness to the Lord*, to intimate that he took away the iniquity of their holy things. Exod. xxviii. 37, 38. And hence Job thus speaks: "Dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one!" (Job xiv. 3, 4.)

And now without amplifying testimonies, what is the upshot of this examination of scripture for proving the correctness of the article? I appeal to common sense. 'Original or birth sin, (saith the article,) is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.' And what saith the scriptures of God in confirmation: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," (Rom. v. 12.)

The next office which I have to perform, is to go through my catechism in the several questions framed, or supposed to be framed on this article; and which I shall follow up one by one according to the order in which they are placed.

'OF ORIGINAL SIN.'

Question 1.—'Did the fall of Adam produce such an effect on his posterity, that mankind thereby became a mass of mere corruption, or of absolute and entire depravity? Or is the effect only such that we are very *far gone* from original righteousness, and of our own nature inclined to evil?'

Answer.—If ever a question received a full, clear, and

unequivocal answer, the former part of this question hath already received it from the decisive testimony of God himself. Here it is: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," (Gen. vi. 5.) One might have thought that God's decision would have been final. And that this conclusion made by the Lord himself, would have for ever silenced any attempt to soften the words of God with an abatement from some supposed goodness in man. For what greater mass of corruption, and absolute and entire depravity can be conceived than what the Lord himself hath declared! "The wickedness of man was great in the earth; and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually." Surely a more finished picture of human corruption cannot be drawn.

And in respect to the latter part of this question, namely, 'is the effect only such, that we are very far gone from original righteousness, and of our nature inclined to evil?' In answer I would beg to say, that before the person who proposed this question brought it forward, and marked, (as he hath done,) the words *very far gone*, with peculiar emphasis; though he hath taken them from the article as rendered into English; he ought to have known, or if he did not he must now be told, that they will not suit his purpose; and therefore if he hath laid any stress upon them, it will fail him. For though it be true indeed, that our English translation hath so rendered them, *very far gone;* yet the Latin original, (and the articles were first written in Latin,) fully discountenanceth it. *Ab originali justitiá quam longissime distet,* is not faithfully translated in the phrase, 'man is *very far gone* from original righteousness.' *Very far gone*, is but in the *comparative* degree; whereas *quam longissime*, is in the *superlative* degree. And therefore had the translation been

correct, it would have stated what the original meant, namely, that man is as far gone as he can go, (for this only is the *superlative*,) from original righteousness. And then if the question be framed upon this correct rendering of the words of the article, and it be asked, how far is this? The scriptures on whose authority the article is founded, have already fully answered, when saying, that he is by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," (Eph. ii. 1.)

It is a melancholy consideration, and next to the awful evil of sin itself, the most deplorable of all events to be lamented in the tremendous consequences of the fall, that every man is blind by nature to his own sunken state. The unhumbled pride of the human heart is everlastingly disposed to cherish more favourable views of mankind than what the word of God teacheth and daily experience proves. The wisdom of this world, (as it is emphatically called in scripture,) from a total ignorance of God, hath been in all ages, and still continueth the same, endeavouring to bring forward exceptions to the scripture statement of universal depravity. Persons under this influence have contended that there are still remains of virtue and moral goodness in mankind, uncontaminated by the fall. And many a figure and similitude hath been adopted by those advocates for human rectitude, by way of an illustration of an hypothesis so congenial to their wishes. Such men do not altogether quit the sacred ground of holy scripture, by denying *in toto* the doctrine of the fall; but allowing that some mighty injury hath been sustained in our nature since the creation; yet like the ruins of a temple, where broken pillars and high columns are still to be seen, which indicate somewhat of the former magnificence and splendour; so the remains of intellect and understanding some men possess over others, in their apprehension testify that much good remains! Such representations look well on paper, and

read very pretty in figure: they serve to amuse the wisdom of this world; but, alas, the whole is a fiction, and tending only the more, by the vail of metaphor, to conceal the truth.

God the Holy Ghost hath drawn a very different map of our fallen nature, in his delineation of Babylon. "Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch a tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near come, and her days shall not be prolonged," (Isa. xiii. 19, &c.) Look beyond the metaphor of these descriptions; pass over Babylon and include human nature in the view universally, and we shall discover that it suits all. For as the scripture demands, "are we better than they? No! in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin," (Rom. iii. 9.) And what is the Lord's obvious meaning in this figure, but what the Lord hath elsewhere stated in plain language; speaking of those who walk in the vanity of their mind, the Lord saith; they have "the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts," (Eph. iv. 18.)

Question 2.—'Does the notion of man's corruption, or absolute depravity, produce in general what is considered its chief recommendation, a deep sense of humility?'

Answer.—I dare not call that a *notion* which God

the Holy Ghost hath so decidedly, and in language so very awful, declared to be a most solemn *truth*. Alas! man's total corruption and absolute depravity before God, is too deplorable a fact to be spoken of lightly under the idea of a *notion;* having no foundation for its truth in the testimonies of God himself.

Neither can I admit in this question what is here asserted, but unsupported by any authority, that the notion, (as it is called,) of man's corruption or absolute depravity, is considered as its chief recommendation, that it produceth a deep sense of humility. There can be nothing produced in the human mind, of humbleness for sin, but by the gracious operations of God the Holy Ghost. John xvi. 8. And in every renewed heart where God hath wrought those acts of grace, there, but no where else, will be a deep sense of humility. Every regenerated child of God, who through divine teaching, is brought acquainted with the plague of his own heart, will find cause for humbleness all his life long. And the same almighty Instructor who hath taught him what he is in himself, brings him also into an acquaintance with the person and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence humbleness of soul will always accompany divine teaching; and a deep sense of sin will induce from the same source, cries of the soul to the depths of divine mercy. Psm. xlii. 7. But no true humbleness of soul was ever formed from any other cause. No notions of men can produce humbleness before God. It is the Lord alone which takes away the heart of stone, and gives the heart of flesh, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26) Stones may be warmed indeed by the sun's heat, or any other external cause as of fire. And the same marble of the hearth or mantle-piece of our chimnies, which will receive the momentary effect from these causes, will equally in the open air become wet on the surface from the condensation of external vapours. But it requires no great discoveries in the prin-

ciples of philosophy to know, that in both instances, there is nothing of change within, the nature of the marble is the same. Precisely is this the case with regard to the nature of man by the fall. All outward operations have no effect to change the heart within. And no notions of corruption will accomplish this purpose. "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," (Prov. xvi. 1.)

Question 3.—'Has not the frequent repetition of the doctrine, that we are not only *far gone* from righteousness, but are nothing better than a mass of mere corruption and depravity, a tendency to destroy all sense of virtue or moral goodness?'

Answer.—If the frequent repetition of the doctrine of man's total corruption and depravity, be productive of the consequences here charged against it, God himself must answer it; for it is by his express authority the faithful servants of the Lord make these continual proclamations. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins," (Isa. lviii. 1.) See Isa. i. 2, 6.

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. And though they say the Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely," (Jer. v. 1, 2.)

And the whole gospel of Christ is founded upon the complete ruined and lost estate of the church. Hence the Son of God saith, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," (Matt. ix. 13.) "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," (Luke xix. 10.)

How far the frequent use of those solemn, but humiliating truths proclaimed in the church, have a tendency to destroy all sense of virtue or moral goodness,

it would be becoming in any man bringing the charge to shew. One thing is certain, that until grace hath been manifested to the heart, there can be no disposition to any virtue or moral goodness; for the Holy Ghost testifieth, that "there is none that seeketh after God;" and when a change is wrought by grace, it is said that "according to the divine power there is given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto glory and virtue," 2 Peter i. 3, 4.

Question 4.—'Is it possible that a doctrine which tends to destroy all sense of virtue or moral goodness, should be a doctrine that comes from God?'

Answer.—This question is founded on false premises, and as such, the inference framed on it cannot but produce false consequences also. The doctrine of proclaiming man's utterly lost, ruined, and undone estate by nature, hath not the smallest tendency to destroy, but on the contrary to define, what is true virtue or moral goodness, and from whom alone it comes. And as such, it carries with it a plain testimony that it comes from God. The history of the conversion of the apostle Paul, as recorded in the scripture, becomes a beautiful illustration of this great point. Paul tells us in his own history, that the confidence he had when in a state of nature, of his own rectitude and moral goodness, was such, that he had no idea of any great defect in his religious life and conversation. "For I was alive (said he) without the law once;" that is, like this question in the catechism, he had an high sense of his own virtue and moral goodness. "But (said he) when the commandment came," that is, when man's total corruption and depravity was preached to him by the sovereignty of God's word, and accompanied to his heart with the sovereignty of God's power, then, and not before, the commandment came; that is, came home to the heart in the spirituality of it, and opened

to his spiritual apprehension his lost estate by nature, "sin revived;" that is, he was led to see sin as it is, in all its condemning properties; and "he then died" to all future ideas of any moral virtue or goodness in himself! Hence therefore, when the question be proposed, 'Is it possible that a doctrine which tends to destroy all sense of virtue or moral goodness, should be a doctrine that comes from God?' The answer is direct. Nothing can more decidedly shew what comes *from* God, than what leads *to* God. And as a deep sense of our lost estate by nature, becomes the best and truest step to seek for salvation by grace; here we find how gracious the Lord is, by teaching us our nothingness in ourselves, to see that all our sufficiency is in the Lord Jesus Christ; and that, as the Lord speaks by the prophet, so the church finds; "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help!" Hosea xiii. 9.

Question 5.—'Do we exalt the Creator, by degrading the creature?'

Answer.—If God's own answer be admitted as decisive to this question, our catechist on this point is done up. For the Holy Ghost expressly declares by Paul, that the whole process of redemption from beginning to end, is, "that in the ages to come, God might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, by Christ Jesus." Eph. ii. 7. Yes! therefore, I would say, (for God himself hath authorized me so to say) we do indeed exalt the Creator by degrading the creature; that is, not by representing him lower than he really is, for that is impossible; but in forming the character of fallen man by the unerring standard of scripture; and that is seeing him as he is by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins;" as incapable of performing one act of spiritual life until quickened by the Holy Ghost, as a dead body to perform any one act of animal function.

And let me in my turn propose a question;—Is it

not highly exalting the Creator, when we ascribe every act of grace to his free love in raising up the creature from the ruins of the fall? Is not God's glory the first and ultimate end of all things? And is not God's glory hereby advanced to the highest sublimity our imagination can possibly conceive, when the Lord overrules the very miseries we have involved ourselves in by sin, to the fuller display of the riches of his grace in the aboundings of his mercy? Hath God indeed laid things so deep in the divine counsels, of what is called by way of eminency, "the wisdom of God in a mystery;" that the very humblings of our nature by divine sovereignty, are made subservient to the greater exaltation of his love; and even redemption itself, with all its blissful consequences in relation to us, are but the *effect;* Jehovah's glory in his trinity of persons being as in all other things the *cause?* And is it among the most gracious acts of God the Holy Ghost to become that great spiritual anatomist to his people, that by "his word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" the Lord dissects and lays open to our own view, the depth of sin in our hearts; the more blessed to make application of the blood of Christ to cleanse us from all sin? Oh! who that is conscious of these things, but must feel constrained to say with the apostle; "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33.

Question 6.—'What advantage then can we derive from a doctrine which converts mankind into a mass of absolute and entire depravity?'

Answer.—It is not the *doctrine* which converts mankind into a mass of absolute and entire depravity; for they are all so by original or birth sin, as our church article states it, and as scripture shews; but it is our perversion of God's truths which tends to make us sink deeper into this mass of depravity. What the Lord

said by the prophet, in his complaint of the rejection of his counsel, is of everlasting operation in all ages. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. For from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet, even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly; saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush," Jer. vi. 10—15.

If it be asked, therefore, what advantage can we derive from the doctrine which considers all mankind by nature as alike a mass of absolute and entire depravity? The answer is best given by the Lord himself. What the Lord shewed to his servant the prophet Ezekiel, in those "chambers of imagery," into which the Lord led him one after another, to bring him more and more acquainted with the corruptions of the human heart, carries a sanction with it for an example to all generations of the church. At every renewed visit, and under increasing manifestations of iniquity, the Lord put the question to the prophet; "hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do," Ezekiel viii. throughout. And in that other beautiful chapter of the Lord by the same prophet, the doctrine is preached by the Lord himself, in a way of shewing the depth of human misery by the fall, and to illustrate the aboundings of divine grace in our recovery. After a long and most interesting account of divine love and human misery, the Lord sums up the whole in those striking words, which at once prove the advantage of holding forth to the church the wretched state of man by sin, and the

great loving-kindness of the Lord in his recovery by grace. "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. throughout.

Having now finished my examination of the articles on three of the most principal and leading doctrines of faith; namely, 'of the holy Trinity;' 'predestination and election;' and 'original or birth sin;' and also brought forward the scripture proofs on which our established church grounds her authority for the same; and having followed up both with my answers to the several questions in the catechism on those subjects; I have in a great measure accomplished the object which I had in view, in writing to you upon the occasion. There are indeed several chapters more in this catechism; but the answers which I have already given in to the doctrines under the three great points enumerated, do include, more or less, all the remainder. It would only be going over the ground again, which I have already trodden, to add more, and unnecessarily increasing what was originally intended to form but a few pages in a letter, to the bulk of a little mail. I will therefore just glance at the subjects 'of regeneration, or the new birth,' and the doctrine of 'free will,' and conclude my letter.

'OF REGENERATION, OR THE NEW BIRTH.'

It would be a subject of all others the most overwhelming to the mind, in point of difficulty to explain, were it not accounted for in the word of God, that men possessed of the first talents in human literature, but untaught of God, should all stumble at the very threshold of the gospel, on the subject of regeneration. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ upon it are as plain

and simple, as language can express; "Ye must be born again," John iii. 7. And hence it follows, that as every man is altogether passive in his birth of nature, the very term of, "born again," carries with it the fullest conviction, that he is equally passive in the new birth of grace.

And indeed regeneration implies as much. For what is regeneration, but the reiteration of an act done before. Unless therefore, a man had some hand in the first act of his generation, it could not be called regeneration, even if he had some hand in his new birth. And that our first scholars in human learning should have accepted the original words of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they have uniformly done, and yet themselves misconstrue their first and most obvious meaning, is (but for the reason I before assigned) perfectly unexplainable. Γεννηθη ανωθεν, John iii. 3. and Γεννηθηναι ανωθεν, verse 6. both limit the act to a power from above: and of consequence, man hath no part in the sovereign work; for it is a new creation. And that the same is in perfect harmony with all the other parts of scripture is evident; for the regenerate are said to be born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. And to shew yet more, that the work itself is from the sole operation of God, the Lord Jesus hath drawn the line of distinction, between the operations of nature and grace, when he saith, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," verse 6.

Neither doth our Lord stop here, in his account of regeneration. For to manifest that the work is wholly the Lord's, unconnected with, and independent of any act, or merit in man, the Lord Jesus compares the divine operation to the undiscovered source of the air, "which bloweth where it listeth; and though we hear the sound thereof, we know not whence it cometh, nor

whither it goeth," verse 8. The most untutored peasant, and the wisest philosopher, are here brought to a level. The one knoweth no more than the other the origin of the wind. How the wind is gendered; how first excited; how kept up; and when subsiding, where it goeth; these things are alike mysterious to both. The *effects* are felt, but the *cause* unknown. "So (saith the Lord Jesus) is every one that is born of the Spirit!" verse 6.

And to add another beautiful illustration from these words of our Lord; the Son of God proves hereby the great doctrine of election. For the freedom of this wind in blowing where it listeth, regenerating one and not another, as decidedly preacheth distinguishing grace, as if a synod of angels were to proclaim it daily over every parish church in christendom. Nay, infinitely more. God himself hereby confirms what he said to Moses. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," Rom. ix. 15. compared with Exod. xxxiii. 19.

To answer, therefore, the several questions in this catechism on regeneration, or the new birth, (though they all may be included and answered in one) we must first take up the subject itself on scripture ground. And when this is done, the questions themselves put on a new face. Every one baptized by the Holy Ghost is born again; and if the Lord the Spirit accompanieth the ordinance of the outward means with his sovereign, creating grace, (which we humbly pray for in the church service) this is the one almighty act of God the Holy Ghost; and like the election of the Father, and the redemption by the Son, once done, is done for ever. And under the hope of this accompanying mercy, the church service so expresseth it; 'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerated,' &c. But that without this sovereign power of God the Holy

Ghost graciously exercising his creating work, the ordinance itself hath no saving efficacy, is evidently meant, and explained in the church catechism on the subject, where speaking to the same point it is said, that 'water is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.' There can be no schism in the two services of the church; hence we see that they mutually explain each other.

And in respect to what our Lord hath himself said on this subject, verse 5. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" it should be observed that the Lord Jesus is not speaking here of the ordinance of baptism. For the explanation of these blessed words of Christ, we must consult what the Holy Ghost hath said, by his servant the prophet Ezekiel, chapter xxxvi. 25—28. when promising "to sprinkle his people with clean water;" which all commentators have considered to mean the blood of Christ, and given them "a new heart and a new spirit;" (which hath a like reference to the regeneration of the Holy Ghost) here the new birth by water and the Spirit is shewn. And surely no man would interpret the words of Christ in a less manner, when speaking of being "born of water and of the Spirit." The elementary water, which our church declares to be an 'outward sign' only, could not be meant. The Lord Jesus promised the baptism of the Spirit to his disciples after his ascension; and which auspicious blessing was fulfilled on the day of pentecost; but there was no water, no elementary water used on this occasion. Besides, had the Lord Jesus meant elementary water when he said, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," would the Lord Jesus have classed this water of the earth upon a level, or as a thing of equal importance to be attended to, with the person and work of God the Holy Ghost? Yea, have placed the

water in precedency before the Spirit? One of God's creatures before the infinite Creator? Moreover, how can a man be said to be *born* of elementary water? Born of the Spirit every new born child of God is; but how can that which is declared by Christ himself to be a spiritual birth, be produced of what is wholly natural?

I venture to believe, that our catechist himself will join issue with me on one point of the subject, however we may differ on others, namely, that not a few, it is to be apprehended, by what we behold in life, remain strangers to the new birth, who have received the outward sign of water baptism; while on the other hand, many who never had the privilege of this ordinance, have given clear and unequivocal testimonies, of having been baptized with the Holy Ghost. The thief on the cross, is an instance in point to the latter; and Simon Magus, as decided a proof to the former; who though baptized even by an apostle himself, remained "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii.)

'OF FREE WILL.'

If the article of the church of England, as by law established, can be supposed to have any one meaning whatever on this subject, and the words the church hath made use of to express her meaning on the occasion be accepted, a volume could not have said more to define her sense of free will than is done in that article.

'The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that good will.'

If these sound truths, confirmed as they are both by the scriptures of God, and by the uniform testimony of the church of God in all ages, can now be controverted and proved erroneous by real facts, let them be so. But then in the accomplishment of this purpose instead of questions what some men think, or other men say, on the subject of free will, and of a man's own share in the work of salvation; let the advocates of such doctrines bring forward their witnesses, to impugn this article, by demonstrating the very reverse of what is there stated. Let them shew that the condition of every man after the fall of Adam is such that he *can* turn; and that he can prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Surely if the statement of such persons be correct, it can be no very difficult matter to produce instances from the history of mankind of those which have done so. And if a single proof can be found in all the annals of the world, of one, even one, who hath in whole, or in part, saved himself, or prepared himself to come to Christ for salvation, the words of our Lord Jesus must be done away; for he hath said, "no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John vi. 44.) And with this overthrow of the words of Christ, the whole tenor of the gospel must be changed also: for then the negative to that decisive proposition of God the Holy Ghost will take place, in which the Lord hath said by Paul, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix 16.) Nay, we must invert the very order of things, and no longer dwell upon those divine proclamations of God; "for by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

Oh! what an awful delusion of the human mind must it be when this supposed freedom of man's will is

to accomplish, what the scriptures of God, and the uniform experience of all ages prove, can only result from the free grace of God. If any thing can add to the misery of our nature by the fall, surely it is the aggravation of our unconsciousness of it. We are not only born in sin, but in a total state of blindness, and ignorance of our sin: not only "transgressors from the womb," as the Lord declares, Isa. xlviii. 8. but without "the fear of God before our eyes." (Rom. iii. 18.) Yea, and to complete this portrait of human misery by the fall, there is not only in our nature a thorough dereliction of all good, but in the midst of all evil, we are bloated in the full swollen confidence of possessing high moral excellencies of character! The spots of death are every where upon us: and we fancy ourselves in a supposed state of convalescence. The petechiæ manifest the pestilence, but the subjects of the disease are unapprehensive of any danger; and like the church of Laodicea, described by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, "thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!" (Rev. iii. 17.)

My dear young man! I shall have said enough, and more than enough, to convince you, that under the present existing circumstances, your admission into orders becomes more than questionable. The views which the Lord hath given you in divine things, will not suffer you to pay the toll demanded at this newly erected gate. But you have a never-failing resource in the sovereignty of God. If the Lord hath designed you, and ordained you as he did Jeremiah from the womb for his service; in due season the Lord will appear for his own glory. There is "a set time to favour Zion." He that hath "the key of David," will set before "you an open door, and no man can shut it." And until this is done, it were to run unsent: which is

among the most awful and portentous signs of the present day!

In the mean while call to mind those blessed words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, "in your patience possess ye your souls!" The very dispensation will be sanctified if it leads you to rest more on the divine faithfulness, and to study more the divine sovereignty. "Be still, and know that I am God!" And never for a moment lose sight of this unquestionable truth, namely, that the Lord's hand is in every appointment of the Lord's providences. Men are but instruments for bringing about the sacred purposes of his will; yea, and sometimes they are made the unconscious instruments of accomplishing the very reverse of what they themselves intend. It will be your mercy, upon this, and every other occasion, if you can look off from man, and repose yourself in God. That is a precious scripture, and was not recorded for nothing, when one under peculiar straitenings, could, and did say, "I will cry unto God most high! unto God that performeth all things for me." (Psalm lvii. 2.)

All is well, and cannot but be well, in relation to the everlasting interests of the church of God. Whatever means in the stores of the Lord's omnipotency, the Lord hath appointed for the gathering in his people, it is already arranged in "the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure;" and with a wisdom which cannot err, and a sovereignty which cannot fail. And as Moses told Pharaoh, that of Israel's property, not "an hoof should be left behind;" so of God's Israel it may be said, not the least of the little ones shall be found wanting "in that day when the Lord maketh up his jewels." In the accomplishment of this purpose, the Lord will send by whom he will send. And however gratifying it may be, according to our present apprehension of things, to be employed in the Lord's ser-

vice, when we ourselves have tasted that the Lord is gracious; yet here, not unfrequently, as in numberless other occasions, "our thoughts are not God's thoughts, neither our ways God's ways!"

I have often considered the subject, and in every renewed review of it, received increasing conviction that it must be abounding grace in the Lord towards his creatures, in the revelation he hath been pleased to make of himself. And I have sometimes, and not unfrequently said in the warmth of the moment, I should have lived to no small purpose, had the Lord called me into this state of being, if it had been only to have received under divine teaching, a spiritual apprehension of what the scriptures have revealed of Jehovah, as he s in himself in his trinity of persons, independent of every other consideration, and to have been enabled to have put my hearty amen to the Lord's glory!

And I have gone further, and remarked that my note would have swollen into fuller praise, had the Lord in his aboundings of grace, brought me acquainted with not only the revelation Jehovah hath made of himself in his trinity of persons; but what he hath done, is doing, and will to all eternity do for his church and people. And though I had learned no more of his divine love than "the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel," yet would life have been a gracious gift of God, "to have seen the good of his chosen, to have rejoiced in the gladness of his people, and to give glory with his inheritance."

But when in the exceeding riches of his grace, Jehovah in his trinity of persons hath not only given a spiritual apprehension of these things as they are in themselves, but hath given with it a spiritual apprehension of a personal interest in them; here the soul becomes overwhelmed in the contemplation of this unspeakable gift of God, so as to say with the apostle,

"Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Under impressions like these, and with the divine sovereignty always in view, we may well leave all appointments for the government of the Lord's church in the Lord's hand. "Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" this is enough. Here, therefore, every regenerated child of God should rest. Where we are placed, or to what situations called; whether to minister, or to be ministered unto; all these are in the appointment of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." So that whether the Lord "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," all act under his direction as shall best subserve the Lord's eternal purposes, for "the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!"

Farewell! "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen!"

ROBERT HAWKER.

Charles Vicarage, Plymouth, 1821.

THREE LETTERS

TO THE

REV. R. POLWHELE,

VICAR OF MANACCAN, CORNWALL,

IN REPLY TO HIS ADDRESS,

OCCASIONED BY HIS LATE EXPEDITION INTO CORNWALL.

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. xiv. 10.)

LETTER I.

Reverend Sir,

A Letter dated from Manaccan, so long since as the first of June, is this moment put into my hands, which in the title-page is said to be written by you, and addressed to me. I shall assume it for granted that you are the author of it, though other authority I have none than what the title-page affords. The method to be sure is novel, and for the preservation of good order and decorum in society, I hope it will long remain peculiarly *your own;* to address a letter ostensibly to an individual, and that too on the subject of reproof, and yet to suffer it to come to him only through the indirect channel of the public. Would it not have been more consistent with the candour you so highly profess, to have given me the earliest opportunity of vindicating myself, before you held me up to the derision of the world? In our boyish days, it was ever deemed the decided mark of a very dastardly spirit, to strike the first blow from behind. And I believe the general sense of mankind, in riper years, is not in favour of a contrary opinion. You will forgive me therefore, I hope, that in reply to your favour, I venture to depart from your plan.

Indeed I conceive it to be but a common act of honour, of honesty, and of candour, to afford an oppo-

nent the earliest moment of self-justification. As such, Sir, you may assure yourself, that the very first impression of my letter from the press, shall be the copy which I send you. And when that is dismissed, I shall consider myself at liberty, and not till then, of sending my answer after your letter, before the public, to which you have thought proper to appeal.

You will pardon me also, I hope, in presuming to swerve from your example in another instance. Your letter comes to me and to the public at large, with an expence of eighteen-pence. My reply to you will be folded up in a three-penny pamphlet. Perhaps there are some in the world who may be ready to construe this wrongfully, as if it were an act of rudeness to answer a letter written on gilt-edge paper, on coarser materials. But your mind, I hope, is above such prejudices. The mere shadow is nothing, provided the substance be not wanting. I am very sure that all I shall have to say in answer to your letter, may be contained within the compass of as many pages as three-pence ought to purchase. And surely to use more would be throwing away time, paper, and money unnecessarily. That the public will be pleased to have our correspondence with the least possible expence cannot be doubted; and as to all other considerations, depend upon it, however interesting you or I may fancy our controversy to be, such is the Athenian spirit of the age in their lust for something new, that when the novelty of our writing is a little worn off, our letters will cease to amuse, and be thrown aside among the rubbish of the day, or furnish materials for the trunk-makers.

In your title-page you profess that your address to me, is occasioned by my late expedition into Cornwall. And from the general complexion of your letter, as well as from what you positively advance, that 'the regular clergy, and the more sober part of their flock

are displeased with that presumptuous spirit which hath apparently prompted me to visit their parishes as a missionary of the gospel, (page 4;) it cannot but strike every reader, that according to your representation, my late visit into Cornwall was with no other view but to preach; and that I am in the frequent habit of going into other parishes on this errand. I presume this to be your meaning, and that under this impression of your mind, you have placed yourself in the censor's chair, and summoned me to appear before you. But if it should be found on examination, that my late excursion into Cornwall was upon very different motives; and that perhaps no one among the whole body of clergy, in this or any other diocese, wanders less from his parish than I do, what will you then say, Sir?—You must, you cannot, I think, but allow, that this part at least of your crimination of me is ill-founded, and that you have done me manifest wrong, in wantonly attacking my character on a premature and groundless foundation.

In explaining this business, I can with much truth aver, (and if it required further proof, the fact might easily be substantiated from the testimony of many witnesses,) that my late quixotic expedition, (as you consider yourself at liberty to call it,) was solely with the view of spending a few days with some very dear and very valuable friends at Falmouth, and to fetch from thence, when those days were over, a part of my family, which had been there on a much longer visit. And during the twelve days which were appropriated to this purpose, (and they were but twelve, three of which were necessarily spent in the journey to and from,) I was never absent from Falmouth but once, and that not to preach, but to dine; I never officiated in any church but Falmouth, and that at the particular request of the minister of the parish, except on my return through Truro, when, by the earnest solicitations

of some in that place, who had at *their* instance, and not *mine*, obtained permission for the use of the pulpit from the ministers of St. Clement and Kenwyn.—I preached once in each of those churches. And from the politeness shewn me by both those clergymen, I had no reason to suspect, that the liberty I had obtained from their courtesy, was the effect of any indirect or improper means used by those who applied to gain their favour. And therefore by the by, without you will acknowledge that you contradict yourself, what you observe in one part of your letter is not to be reconciled with what drops from your pen in another. You say in your first page, that 'the fame of my preaching has reached from the east and from the west, and been echoed from the heights of Maker, and re-echoed from the shores of the Lizard.' And yet in the 86th page you say, 'that under the imposing mask of my divinity, I took possession of the pulpits of some who were unacquainted with my doctrines. On what principles of truth you will reconcile those bold and unauthorized assertions I leave you to determine.

With respect to the charge of itinerancy, so very opposite is this to my real character, that during the period of more than twenty years, in which I have exercised my feeble ministry in the parish of Charles, I have never been absent from it in any one year of that time, three Sundays. Mark! I beseech you what I say. Not *three Sundays* in any one year; and consequently not threescore Sundays, put them altogether, in the whole term of twenty years. Can Mr. Polwhele contend for greater residence? Is there a single minister in the whole diocese, nay, in the whole kingdom, unless from some particular causes, more stationary? I presume, Sir, you had no consciousness of this when you came forward to tell the public, that 'the regular clergy, and the more sober part of their flock, are displeased with that presumptuous spirit which hath appa-

rently prompted me to visit their parishes as a missionary of the gospel!' (page 4.)

You profess to be actuated in your conduct towards me, 'not from any personal prejudice,' (page 88;) that 'however mistaken my religious persuasions may be, you are willing to hope that I believe all I preach, (page 3;) that you are ready to make allowances for the infirmities common to many, and to assist your weaker brethren by every act of kindness,' (page 90;) and that 'whatever our tenets may be, nothing can afford comfort at the hour of death, but the consciousness of having done justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with our God,' (page 91.)

To this standard of character, erected by yourself, I beg to appeal; leaving with you the decision, whether in your conduct towards me, either of the virtues of which you sketch the outlines, and with your own pencil, have been called forth into exercise. And in order to make a fair estimate, I shall not single out any detached parts of your conduct, as manifested in the present instance only, but by a retrospective view, collect into a point, the whole of your deportment, as it refers to me, from the first moment in which I have been honoured with your notice, to this hour.

The commencement of our correspondence, Reverend Sir, you cannot but recollect, opened on your part as long since, (as appears by the date of your letter,) as September, 1793, in which you were pleased to entrust me with a commission, and which a subsequent acknowledgment with thanks from you, fully testified that I had executed with fidelity, and to your approbation. I have never, to my knowledge, either before or since that period, had the honour of seeing you in person; and never any other communication with you by letter or otherwise, but in the instance to which I advert, and the present letter which is now before me, consequently I can have given you no personal offence;

and the sentiments expressed in your first letter on the presumption of their sincerity, might very fairly be expected to have their operation in the present moment. As it is very possible you may have forgotten the contents of that letter, I beg to refresh your memory with it. You may assure yourself the following is a faithful copy :—

"*Kenton, near Exeter, Sept. 6th*, 1793.

"REV. SIR,

"A short time since an advertisement appeared in our provincial papers, announcing the intended publication of the History of Devon, and of the Historical Views of Devon. The latter are now published. And I have dispersed throughout the county, such a number of copies as I think may be sufficient for my subscribers. For your neighbourhood I had committed thirty-one sets to the care of Mr. Cookworthy, (accompanied with a prospectus or plan of the whole work, to be distributed gratis ;) but Mr. C.'s avocations, (as he writes me,) will prevent his paying the attention he could wish to my publication. The copies, therefore, remain in his hands, to be intrusted to any friend who may interest himself in the success. Have you leisure yourself, or can you recommend me to any gentleman who will undertake to distribute the copies in Plymouth and the neighbourhood? You may, possibly, think the application to you rather extraordinary, as we have no personal acquaintance. But I am well acquainted with your writings. My religious and political sentiments perfectly accord with your's. And I have taken every opportunity of recommending your late valuable publications on the Trinity, &c. to my literary friends, and to the world at large. * * * *

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[This part of the letter being irrelevant to the present occasion, is omitted.]

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"That I am your *literary* friend, may possibly be received as a sufficient apology for this intrusion: if I am not greatly mistaken in your disposition, you have ingenuousness enough to overlook my violation of forms. At all events, I shall ever, I hope, retain a lively sense of obligation to you, for much religious instruction and exhortation: and, if I have ever the honour of being personally acquainted with you, it will add greatly, I am well assured, to the pleasures and satisfactions of my life.

"I have the honour to remain,

"REV. SIR,

"Your most obedient and most humble servant,

"R. POLWHELE."

"*To the Rev. Dr. Hawker, Plymouth.*"

Now, Sir, on the presumption that this letter expressed the real sentiments of your heart at the time it was written, (which of course you would wish every one to believe,) and that you now profess all those refined feelings of *doing justice, loving mercy*, and the like, professed in your late letter to me, (which you take for granted no one will deny,) will you be good enough, on those principles, to explain the consistency of such professions with the change of conduct shewn towards me?

Supposing all that you wish to have supposed, that some great alteration, and that for the worse, hath taken place in my sentiments and deportment since you honoured me with your first letter: don't you still conceive, on the presumption that you was sincere in the expressions of that letter, that your treatment of me is not to be reconciled with those benevolent principles? To a fallen character, and one more especially of whom you once thought so highly, and even now you still say, 'however mistaken, you are willing to hope that I believe all I preach,' (page 3,) it

hath ever been a maxim among men, and even among some not very remarkable for tenderness, to shew pity and compassion. But you, from whom I had some little pretensions to expect mercy, no sooner do you behold me according to your ideas of things in error, but viewing me as an admirable target for the shaft of ridicule, discharge every arrow in your quiver, and deeply dipped in bitterness; as if fearful amidst the military ardour of the day, the rage should reach the church, and provincial volunteers of the corps might come forward to share with you in the glory of the attack.

Mistake me not, Sir, as if I felt any resentment.—You will miserably lose sight of the drift of my reasoning, if you think so. Believe me it is for *you* I feel, and not for myself. My design by this mode of argument, is to take off a little of that film from your eyes, which in the midst of so much boasting of acts of justice, and the love of mercy, as the only consolations of a dying hour, makes you blind to your own insincerity, and renders you unconscious of your own conduct. I want you to see, Sir, and if possible to feel also, what a bubble man is to himself, when, in an instance like your's, where the scholar, the gentleman, the christian, and the divine are supposed to be united, such professions and such practice meet together.

Had Mr. Polwhele really felt what he said, when professing that 'at all events he should ever retain a lively sense of obligation to Dr. H. &c.' and that 'if he ever had the honour of being personally acquainted, it would add to the pleasures of his life, &c.,' though afterwards he had been told that Dr. H. was acting in a way derogatory to his character, still he would have generously said, 'I will attempt to rescue a man whom I once so highly esteemed, from his error.'—And if after repeated remonstrances I had proved incorrigible, such a letter, and in such a style as the one sent forth

to the public, would have been sufficiently sharp, and sufficiently severe to have corrected much greater wanderings than mine.

But what is the fact? You have, Sir, either on the ill-founded opinion of your own mind, or misinformation received from others, not only by way of contempt turned my private visit to a friend, into a *quixotic expedition*; and charged me with an itinerancy, to which I am a stranger; but what is infinitely worse, by indirect insinuation in some instances, and by open charge in others, you have represented me in such a point of view, as if true, would make me not barely unworthy the confidence of a man, but totally unfit to sustain the character of a minister of Christ.

I can, and do smile, when I hear you say, 'Whitfield is my teacher,' whose person I never saw, and with whose writings I am unacquainted. I can, and do smile again, when you tell me you have heard of my making 'boastings of numerous congregations,' which I never made; and of 'exulting in hosannas' which were never uttered. I feel upon those occasions, just as I think every man should feel, less pain than pleasure, in such a sportive display of the powers of your imagination. But when you presume to insinuate a disposition unfavourable to the church, and state, in a man with whose person you are unacquainted, and with whose political writings,* had you read them, you would have discovered very different sentiments: by what name shall this feature of your mind be termed?

I dare not forget, Sir, the respect I owe myself, so

* I have assumed the freedom of sending with this letter a copy of an appeal of mine to the people of England, on the subject of the French revolution, written in the end of the year 1794. When I wrote it I sent it forth into the world anonymously, that neither the insignificance of the author on the one hand, nor his particular situation as a minister of the establishment on the other, might impede its utility. When you have read it, (if you condescend so to do) I hope you will see the injury you have done me in judging so unfavourably of my political sentiments.

far as to drop the manners of the gentleman; and, I trust the Lord will not suffer me to pass by the reverence I owe him, so far, as to lose the temper of the christian and the minister. No, Sir! It shall be enough for you to say, as you do in the first page of your letter, that 'there is a lying spirit gone forth among the people:' while I feel no concern to inquire to whom you meant to imply this. But when in adopting your language, I say there is indeed a lying spirit gone forth among the people, I beg it may be understood, that I rather hope Mr. Polwhele is among the deceived, than those who deceive.

But whatever you may think of the matter, in my apprehension, the most awful part is that of which you seem to be perfectly unconscious: for to find such a train of conduct in one, whose chief confidence, as he tells us, at the hour of death, can only result from the sense of having done justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God, while attempting by so many ways to blacken the reputation of a man who never offended him, and that of a great mass of people together; the mind sickens at the view of such an awful instance of self-deception. It affords a just, but melancholy proof of what scripture declares, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9.)

For my part I never beheld a more decided testimony of the doctrine brought into actual practice than what you have shewn in this double correspondence. And pardon me, Sir, when I add, that as often as I think of you, I fear I shall ever connect with the remembrance, the melancholy state of those, who presuming on the same assurance in a dying hour, depart under the same deception of their real character before God; when, even in the instance of a Mr. Polwhele, we see how possible it is for a man to fancy himself to be something when he is nothing.

From the view of your moral profession and practice in its reference to man, suffer me to turn over the page and inspect the seriousness of your religious system as it respects God. You have thought proper to cast me into the ordeal of your examination; and I see no reason why I may not assume an equal freedom in leading you into mine. Indeed, if you are sterling, you will thank me, and not shrink from the furnace. It is impossible that the true ore should sustain any loss in the crucible, from the hottest fire: it serves but to refine it more, and bring it out again with increased brightness. It is the false metal only, which cannot bear the heat.

Happily for the purpose, this part of my subject will be brought within a very narrow compass. The peculiarity of our situation as ministers of the establishment, places us within an inclosure, whose boundaries are marked with a line, which cannot be mistaken.—The articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church of England, to which we both subscribed, and declared our unfeigned assent, and consent, when we were admitted into holy orders, ascertain the point in a moment, respecting our religious principles. It is no longer the question with us, whether the articles, homilies, and liturgy be founded in the real sense of scripture, (for of that, as honest men, we must be supposed to have duly examined, before we subscribed to them), but the single inquiry with us now is, whether as conscientious men, our subscription and belief carry a perfect conformity together.

A short comparative view on this ground of the question of religious sincerity, will do no more to ascertain the point in five minutes, than as many years would accomplish, from the mere effect of inclusive reasoning and argument. And that you may not complain, I beg to come first under this scrutiny.—Uncalled upon, I profess and declare, that without any

mental reservation whatever, I do very cordially and heartily subscribe to the doctrines of the church of England, as set forth in her most excellent articles, homilies, and liturgy, by law established. And if in any one point I have departed from them, either in my writings or preaching, it is unknowingly; and I shall thank any man to point out my error, that, through God's grace it may be acknowledged and corrected.

Now, Sir, for you.—In your ordination service this question was proposed to you by the bishop; to which you were supposed to have given an unreserved answer in the affirmative—'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration to serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?'

Pause—for one moment—and then compare your declaration then, with the whole sum and substance of what you have said in your letter to me now, (for it would be endless to make quotations) and then let your own heart determine (for to that and not to the public, in this instance I appeal) what correspondence there is between both!

Again—In the ninth article of our church, the doctrine of original sin is thus set forth. 'Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam: whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to do evil: so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.'

Your sentiments on this point you have delivered in the note of the 48th and 49th pages of your letter to me, where calling this doctrine of our church Calvinistic, you say, from John ix. 2, 3, where our

Saviour's disciples ask him, "who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" &c. We may draw an inference that the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin is false.

Once more—In the eleventh article of our church, of the justification of man, the words are, 'we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as is more largely expressed in the homily of justification.' Your sentiments, Reverend Sir, on this point, you have very fully shewn in your letter to me, when you say, in the 90th and 91st pages, 'let us all be aware whatever our tenets may be, that nothing can afford us comfort at the hour of death, but the consciousness of having done justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with our God.'

Again—In the eighteenth article of our church, of obtaining eternal salvation only by the name of Christ, she thus expresses herself: 'they also are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.'

Your opinion, Reverend Sir, on this point also, is to be gathered from your letter to me, wherein, in the 88th and 89th pages you say; 'yet be our pursuasions what they may, I am well assured, that if within our several parishes, or according to our different stations, we do our duty to the best of our knowledge and abilities, we shall finally be accepted at the throne of mercy.—Though treading different paths, yet we have but one object before us, and if sincere, we shall all meet, I believe, in the road to salvation.'

Once more, and that shall be all—In the thirteenth article, of works before justification, the church thus speaks: 'Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or as the school authors say, deserve grace of congruity: yea rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.'

Now, Sir, if you please you shall speak again in the words of your letter. 'According to this doctrine, our regeneration depends not in the slightest degree upon ourselves, it is the sole effect of the divine agency. We may be sober, and chaste, and just, and honest, and charitable to the poor, benevolent to all; we may offer up our praises and thanksgivings to God, both in public and private, join in the holy communion, and listen to the word of exhortation, and yet be on a footing, in respect to a spiritual life, with drunkards, and robbers, and sabbath-breakers.'* page 11.

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* I cannot forego the occasion afforded me of correcting your ideas on regeneration. I never should have believed if I had not found it in your letter, that any man of Mr. Polwhele's discernment, could have committed himself so much as to say, 'according to this doctrine, our regeneration depends not in the slightest degree upon ourselves.' Most unquestionably not! The very term regeneration, carries with it the fullest refutation of such an absurdity. For the reiteration of any act, be that act what it may, implies that it is the doing somewhat which hath been done before. So that unless it could be said that a man contributed to his generation, it would be a misapplication of the word to call it *re*-generation. And the merest school-boy, in the first rudiments of grammar, is supposed to know this.

If Mr. P. would attend more to the information of scripture, and less to the presumptuous reasonings of his own mind on this grand point, his ideas would be clearer. It is the distinguishing character by which inspiration hath marked the regenerate, that "they are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. And to define if possible still more accurately the characters of the divine agency in the work, as distinguished from any co-operation with human power, the opposite properties mark them distinctly: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John iii. 6. And moreover, to shew how free and spontaneous this mercy is on the part of God, and how wholly unme-

These comparative views will be sufficient to answer my present purpose; and certainly they exhibit as curious a specimen of your *religious* sincerity, as hath before been shewn of your *moral.*

Before I dismiss the subject, I think it necessary once more to remind you, that I am not now contending on the ground, whether the doctrines of our church are, or are not, agreeably to the scriptures. That you and I have solemnly accepted them, and subscribed to them as such, and at our ordination professed before God, that we would be guided by them in all our preachings, and in the exercise of our ministry among the people; this is the single point, Sir, now in consideration. Pause then, for a moment, and determine for yourself, whether the portrait which I have drawn, and from the outlines you yourself have given, doth not afford so striking a resemblance of the features and complexions of your *religious* sincerity, as when compared to your *moral,* must enable every looker on to discern that it is a family-piece.

I solemnly protest before God, that if my creed corresponded to the account you have given in your letter of your's, at once so foreign to the articles of the church of England, and to many parts of the liturgy, which you are obliged to use in your ministration; I repeat it again, I solemnly protest before God, not all the tender

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rited on the part of man, the operation of the Divine Spirit is compared to the unknown source of the air, "which bloweth where it listeth." For as we hear the sound of the air, and see and feel its effects, yet, all the while, "we know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth." "So" says Christ, adopting this figure by way of explanation, "is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 8.

Mr. P. may, if he pleases, Nicodemus-like, cry out, "how can these things be?" But the question will only serve to shew, that he is a stranger to the principle, but by no means tend to call in question the principle itself. That both this, and the other great points of the gospel at which Mr. P. cavils, are capable of being proved from scripture, I aver, and profess myself always ready, God being my helper, to assert against any man, or any set of men, who being ignorant of experimental religion themselves, venture to question its reality in others.

charities of life, in the sweet and endearing claims of a large family, should induce me to retain my situation in the church, no, not for a moment. You may fancy what you please of the consolation in a dying hour, from the rectitude of your life. I shudder at the idea of such a mistaken calculation, while deficient in the highest possible instance of doing justly as it refers to God by the most awful prevarication and duplicity.

You are pleased to make merry in the dissection of my little bantling which I christened the three leading points of the gospel. But in doing this, Sir, you mistook your province. Nature cannot qualify for this department. It may make a man an historian, or a scholar; but it must be grace to form a spiritual anatomist. And for this service, your letter sufficiently indicates that you are totally incompetent.

From the authority of scripture I assert, that every one of the leading points which I have brought forward in that little production, the bible confirms in every part. Nay, I will assume yet greater confidence, and say, that Mr. P. himself is perpetually giving an unconscious testimony to their truth, in the exercise of his ministry. For when you tell the congregation at the baptism of children, that 'all men are conceived and born in sin;' when you beg of Christ, 'by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, to deliver you from the burden of sin;' do you not confirm the two first points I contend for? I fear indeed, I cannot call upon you as a living testimony to the truth of the third, but the apostle John will do it effectually—"Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," 1 John iv. 13.

I shall now take my leave of you for the present, until you may be pleased to call me forth again. I believe I have noticed every thing in your letter, excepting indeed that farrago of quotations from the writings of others, with which you must be conscious

I have nothing to do. What George Whitfield, or John Wesley, or bishop Lavington was, belongs neither to your province or mine now to judge. You ought to have recollected, Sir, that 'to their own master they stand or fall.' Your praise or censure are both alike indifferent to them. They are gone to their final audit. And you and I are hastening fast after.

However confident you may be, Sir, of the rectitude of your mind, and rest upon it as the consolation of a dying hour, I bless God that "I have not so learned Christ." Though very earnest "to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men," yet my final appeal will be, not to human merit, but to the divine mercy. "I count all things but loss, that I may win Christ." And my dying hopes will be I trust, to be "found in him, not having mine own righteousness-which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ."

I am,

REVEREND SIR,

Your's, &c.

ROBERT HAWKER.

LETTER II.

Mr. Polwhele having thought proper, at the commencement of this correspondence to bring it before the public, Dr. Hawker conceives it to be a duty which he owes the public, to publish every thing connected with it; neither should he think himself justified in holding back any part of the correspondence with which, after Mr. Polwhele's appeal to the public, that public hath an undoubted right to be acquainted. Under this idea, the Doctor begs permission to intro-

duce his second printed Letter to Mr. Polwhele, with the information of what hath passed in private between Mr. Polwhele and himself, since the publication of his former letter.

Dr. H. having waited somewhat more than ten weeks from the time he sent forth his answer to Mr. Polwhele's first letter, (and which he dismissed in one week from the receipt of it) and not hearing of Mr. P.'s intention of making reply, thought it right to send by post a private letter to Mr. P. of which the following is a copy. He only would premise, before the reader enters upon the perusal of it, (lest Mr. P. should ascribe improper motives to the design of this letter) that he solemnly protests he had not the most distant idea at the time he sent this letter, nor for more than a fortnight after, of being honoured again with Mr. P.'s public correspondence.

Plymouth, November 6th, 1799.

REV. SIR,

After what hath passed between us in a public manner at your instance, it may perhaps at first surprize you to receive a private letter from me at mine.

There are two motives leading to this correspondence, and I hope they will both be found to carry with them their own apology.

The first is to inform you that I have in my possession of your books you sent me to sell for you, remaining unsold, twelve copies of the Historical Views, and eight of the prospectus. They have been faithfully preserved, and shall be until it may suit your convenience to send for them; or if more pleasing to you, they shall be carefully packed up and sent or delivered to your order.

The other motive I have in writing is to assure you, that all resentment on my part is for every done away.

In dying creatures, such as we are, it were some

what worse than childish, to continue contention over the grave.

That we stand upon different ground in sentiment, is very certain; which, if continuing to the end, must produce a very different issue. But, in the mean time, I beg to assure you, that you have my sincerest wishes for your temporal and spiritual welfare.

I remain,

REV. SIR,

Your most humble servant,

ROBERT HAWKER.

The 29th of November, Dr. H. received a letter by post from Mr. P. of which the following is a copy:—

"*Manaccan, Nov.* 26, 1799.

"REV. SIR,

"I received your favour of the 6th instant, and waited only to have an opportunity of informing you, that Flindell, of Helston, printer, has order to send to Mr. Haydon, bookseller, Plymouth, some copies of 'A Second Letter,' &c.

"Of these orders, I have advertised Haydon, of Plymouth, in a letter which will accompany this; desiring him to wait upon you with a copy of the 'Second Letter,' in my name.

"I have also requested the favour of him to send to London for some of my Discourses, and, as soon as they shall arrive, to beg your acceptance of the volumes.

"All the delays of publishing, &c. &c. is attributable to the printers and booksellers. Of the publication of my 'First Letter' to you, I know scarcely any thing, and could not, for a long time, procure a copy for myself.

"My 'Second Letter,' has been a great while in the press, though only a sixpenny pamphlet: and, if it go by the waggon to Plymouth, London, &c. a month or

more will elapse before its regular publication. When my Helston printer chooses to send the copies to Falmouth, ——— will receive one for you also; which you will probably get before the arrival of Haydon's.

"If you will not condescend to accept of the copies of the Historical Views, &c. at your house, for yourself and friends, (and be assured they are much at your service) be kind enough to have them delivered to Haydon.

"I have written nothing (nor do I mean to write any thing) that concerns you, except the 'Second Letter,' and (what was delivered to the printer as a postscript to it) 'Anecdotes of Methodism.' These anecdotes are now printing as a detached work, with the addition of a sermon. I mention this circumstance, as it is not my wish ever again to call your conduct or opinions in question. And it is not my fault, that both the 'Second Letter,' and the Anecdotes, have not been published long since. If several sermons against enthusiasm, &c. (and other tracts) which I have by me, should appear at any future time, you are not to conclude that they bear any allusion to you. I am afraid, that in controversies, the mind of neither party is sufficiently open to conviction. If, however, I should think differently hereafter, be assured that no obstacle whatever shall preclude my revocation of my published sentiments. At present I am convinced—I feel that I am right, and that I act sincerely. With respect to our *personal* feelings, your answer was extremely harsh and severe; my reply is sharp, but not, I trust, illiberal. But now, I beg to assure you, that 'all resentment is, on my part, for ever done away,' and that you have 'my sincerest wishes for your temporal and spiritual welfare.'

"I remain,

"Rev. Sir,

"Your very faithful servant,

"R. POLWHELE."

The 10th of December, Mr. Haydon brought a copy of Mr. Polwhele's second letter, which is now before the public. At which time, Dr. H. delivered the books referred to in the private letter of the 6th of November, together with a letter for Mr. P.;—of which the following is a copy:—

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
November 30, 1799.

REV. SIR,

I have to acknowledge your favour of the 26th inst. which came to hand in due course of post; and have taken the earliest moment to make reply to it, that it may be in readiness against the time that Mr. Haydon shall call, as you have proposed, with a copy of your public letter.

As I am perfectly unapprized of the contents of your second publication, you cannot be led to suppose, that when I decline, as I now do, the acceptance of the books which you have so long left at my house, and of the copy of the Discourses you mention, as intending to send me by Mr. Haydon, that I am prompted by any thing which may appear in your new publication. Be assured, Sir, this is not the case. But the real motives for declining the acceptance of your presents are these —for the perusal of your historical works I can find no leisure; and for your subjects on divinity, after the specimen I have already had, I can have no predilection.

I am waiting, with some small degree of impatience, the arrival of your second public letter; soon after the receipt of which, I shall do myself the honour of as publicly acknowledging your favour. In the interim,

I remain,

REV. SIR,

Your most humble servant,

ROBERT HAWKER.

From this statement of particulars which have taken place, intermediate to the first and second correspondence, the public mind will be now better prepared to enter upon the subject of the second letter which follows, than if this information had been kept back.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
December 10, 1799.

REV. SIR,

Your second letter was put into my hands this morning. I have seen enough of its contents already, to discover the nature of my obligations to you upon the occasion. To be noticed by you in this manner, or indeed in any manner, is certainly a mark of distinction. You have done what you thought proper to do respecting me, no doubt, in a way best suited to your feelings, and to your courtesy. It were unreasonable to expect more from any man.

I am not a little gratified to find that you have accepted the hint I gave you, and to the honour you intend me from your present publication, you have now added the politeness of sending me a copy of it. Be assured, Sir, that I have a proper sense of both favours.

I had thought, from your long silence, that our correspondence was ended. But it appears that in this I was mistaken.

There is a disposition in the human mind since the fall, (I know not by what name particularly to call it) which acts the very reverse of what it should, to produce the peace and tranquillity of society. Inaccessible to just and proper impressions, in proportion as it loses more and more of the finer feelings by its progress in error, it becomes hardened from habit. Hence, in the place of that generous sensibility, which, next to the pleasure resulting from having done what is right, is

unquestionably, the quick apprehension of knowing, and as candidly confessing, the having done what is wrong; the mind disdains all conviction.

Pardon me, Sir, if I venture to suggest, that somewhat of this nature attaches itself to you.

To every person acquainted with the subject of our controversy, but Mr. Polwhele himself, it must have appeared, on the fullest and fairest testimony, that the obloquy and reproach you thought proper to throw on me in your first Letter, were in a great measure, if not altogether, unmerited. And it could not but strike every unprejudiced mind in the same moment, with equal conviction, that if I had erred in my religious deportment, it was an error that ought not to have been considered personally offensive to you; neither did it belong to your province, particularly to reprove. You said, indeed, 'I have thus dared in the name of my clerical brethren, to expostulate with you.'* But without calling in question your veracity on this point, the highest compliment which can be paid, either to the wisdom or to the liberality of that venerable body you professed to personate, would be, to suppose, that both in your *darings* and in your *expostulations*, you very far exceeded their commission. For sure I am, how different soever the medium may be through which any of the clergy of Cornwall behold the truths of the gospel from the vicar of Charles; it is impossible that an individual among the clergy of the whole county could be found, who would have set his *imprimatur* to the many illiberal and ungentlemanlike passages which are contained in that letter.

But, Sir, setting aside the whole of your *first* correspondence, it is to what hath followed since in your deportment, that I advert in the observation just made. Instead of exercising that true magnanimity of the

* Page 60. First Letter.

mind, which, no doubt, in its highest instance, is a conquest over the angry passions of our nature; and particularly, in that most difficult part, where the *injurer* is called upon to forgive the *injured;* instead of following up the dictates of that admirable precept, with which you yourself profess to be so much charmed; of "doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God:" instead of availing yourself of the highly favoured moment of making peace, when my conciliatory letter first seeking it, came to your hands, (and which, as appears both by the date of it, as well as the date of your answer, was in ample season to have prevented your *second* letter issuing from the press,) instead of manifesting such a true nobility of soul, and which would have advanced Mr. Polwhele in the love and esteem of every generous mind; what hath been your conduct towards me since? Not contented with your former misrepresentations of my character, you have endeavoured in this last letter, to draw it in yet darker shades, and have done every thing the utmost malice could devise, to blacken the reputation of one whom you never saw, who never could have injured you, and against whom you had no one cause of provocation, either of fancied or real evil, of which personally to complain.

From an authority, which it is our highest wisdom to reverence, we learn, that "it must needs be that offences come." They must indeed come, because they unavoidably arise out of the very nature and constitution of man as he now is, and from the situation in which he is now placed. But though it be among the infelicities of the present state, that offences must *come*, it is chiefly from our aggravation of the evils of life, when they are made to *stay*.

—— —— —— —— quippe minuti
Semper et infirmi est animi exiguique voluptas
Ultio.——

Mistaken, however, as I have been in my ideas, that a correspondence like your's, originating as it did in unprovoked anger, could terminate so speedily; nothing can equal my astonishment as the information, that even Mr. Polwhele himself could possibly consider my answer 'to be extremely harsh and severe.' Surely, Sir! you are the only man alive that can think so. I defy you to produce a single circumstance in my letter to you, in which I have departed from the candour, the manners, or the dignity of the gentleman. You speak, indeed, of the blast of *my* trumpet, and the 'gathering together of the multitudes, like the locusts of the prophet:' but it is Mr. Polwhere which saith this, and that's enough. Every one who knows any thing of our contest, knows that it was you, and you only, which sounded the horn of clamour, and commanded me, however reluctantly on my part, to the battle. And though, when obeying your summons and following you to the field, I found you armed with such weapons as would have disgraced any cause but your's; yet in all that I have done or said, I have been acting merely on the defensive. It was certainly a duty which I owed myself, my family, the cause of truth, and the world at large, to call into my aid every just and proper method to shield a reputation, dearer to every man of right feelings than life itself, from the hand of violence and cruelty.

But it is possible, no doubt, on a subject so allowedly interesting, to feel too sensibly, and to repel an injury too sharply. And we are but partial judges in our own cause. If I have therefore used any unbecoming warmth, or acted with an asperity unsuitable to the occasion, I shall be ready to accept the justice of decision, and bend to reproof before any fair and honourable tribunal. You will allow me, however, to say, that I should first claim the privilege of a Briton, and chal-

lenge Mr. Polwhele from being among the jurors of my trial.

From the hurt you seem to express, in the supposed severity of my answer to your *first* letter, I am so apprehensive that my reply to your *second*, how mild soever it may be worded, will be deemed so, that before I enter upon my vindication, I would previously beg you to take a cool retrospect of your behaviour towards me, and then ask your own heart what treatment you think you really merit?

In the very onset of your bold, unauthorized, and unqualified accusations, you manifested a disposition to hostility, which outraged all decorum. Assuming for granted, what never had existence but in the extravagancies of your own heated imagination; you came forward with a mightiness of self-sufficiency, as if the whole structure both of church and state was in danger, and rested its preservation upon the prowess of your single arm. And while inflated with rage in the prospect of this phantom of the brain, which your bewildered ideas alone had realized to your view, like the fretful porcupine, armed at all points cap-a-pee, you soon discharged every quill in your fury, until you had left yourself bare and without covering.

Three months have since nearly elapsed, (and three months, for ought I know, naturalists can best determine, may be sufficient to form anew those weapons to an animal of that description,) and you have once more advanced to the combat with double fury, and again darted every quill at me afresh, though convinced, by woeful experience, from your last disgraceful attack, that not a single one from your former covering ever wounded me.

Had the love of God, or the love of man—a real zeal for the true interests of religion, or a real regard for the true welfare of the state—been among the apologies of

your conduct, facts, and not fiction would have formed the outlines of your correspondence. But neither the seriousness of your subject, nor the sanctity of your own character as a minister of Christ, were with you any restraint to suppress that vein of satire which evidently appears to be your *forte*.

Your professions were indeed pure, (for how should they be otherwise with the church in view, and while ostensibly supporting her best interests,) but soon losing sight of that sacred inclosure, you soon appear as on a theatre, where the various characters, selected for public entertainment, are made to speak and act just as the manager pleases, to suit the several purposes of his drama. And where, (to carry on the figure,) as a complete master of the puppet-shew, you have formed your interludes on true pantomimical principles, by introducing the magic lanthorn, and making the shades of Whitfield, Wesley, and Lavington pass and repass in review before you.

But, Sir, had you rested here, content with following the steps of your great masters in the art of ridicule only, I could have well borne, very well indeed, the whole force of your sarcasms, and in the midst of all have found cause to bless God, when taking a comparative statement of my happy lot with those gone before in the christian path, of whom, though it is said, "the world was not worthy," yet they had to contend, not with mere scorn and derision, but with "trials of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment," (Heb. xi. 36.)

And perhaps, from the ludicrous manner in which, under this idea, you had then treated the subject, I might in my turn have assumed the vein of pleasantry also, and from considering you as long labouring under that most wretched disease, which the ancients, if I mistake not, denominated *cacoethes scribendi*, (and

which your 3 vols. folio, of the History of Devon, and your 5 vols. quarto, of Historical Views of Devon, very amply manifest you to be under the influence of,) I should have recommended you to medical aid, in order that by being put under an antiphlogistic regimen, you might have been brought into a state of convalescence. And really, Sir, I do conceive that from the exhibition of emetics, to cleanse the *prima via*, and cathartics to purge choler, together with the occasional application of epispastics to the region of the brain, you might derive many salutary advantages.

Thus, Sir, while you had limited your strictures to the mere jocular part of character, and laughed at what you are pleased to call my methodism in divinity, I would have smiled in my way at what I venture to think your mania in history; and the world, (which you had invited to look on,) might with my full consent, have laughed at both.

But, Sir, your purpose was not for mirth but cruelty. You laughed, indeed, and wished your readers to laugh with you for the moment, but under this mask it required no very great penetration to discover features of a very different complexion. In your base attempt to blacken my reputation by insinuating a disaffection to government, you manifested the malignity of your design. And though a conscious mind of innocence is always more than an over-match for art, yet in the vileness of the attempt, I appeal to the candour of any man, whether it would not have been in some degree pardonable, had I lost, in the warmth of the moment, the stoicism of philosophy.

And yet Mr. Polwhele thinks 'my answer was extremely harsh and severe.' It were to have lived surely within the region of the Torpedo's influence, and to have had induced a paralysis of the worst kind, to have been past all feeling on an occasion like this. The

mind must be palsied indeed, and beyond the reach of any cautery, if insensible to the repeated punctures of those, whom an elegant writer describes, as

"Sticking like leeches, till they burst with blood."

But though I have felt as a man, I trust in God I have no less felt as a christian. If I know any thing of my own heart, my displeasure, in its warmest period, hath been more against the principles than against the person of Mr. Polwhele.—The spectre of resentment did indeed glide through the chambers of my mind in the transiency of the moment, but as it passed it melted into air.

Resentment, did I say? I ought to recall the expression. There have been many, many hours since this correspondence opened, in which, instead of feeling displeasure, I could have thanked you, Sir, for your attack on me. For, however undesignedly on your part, you have done me great honour. And whether you will be pleased to credit it or not, I can assure you, that you have been the means of bringing me forward to the notice of some truly respectable friends, which, perhaps, but for this violence of your's on my character, I never might have known. And what is of infinitely greater consequence still, by this correspondence, you have called up the attention of the public at large, and the clergy in particular, to the investigation of a subject of all others the most interesting, I mean the leading doctrines of the church of England; in the examination of which, if I mistake not, a most essential service will be accomplished. For though it is very obvious that nothing can be more important to every member of the establishment, as well among the congregation as the ministers, to possess the clearest conception of its doctrines, yet it is to be apprehended, by what appears in life, that the subject is not as seriously considered as its importance demands, by either. For

while many of the *former* are uninformed of what they profess, not a few of the *latter* are unconscious to what they have subscribed. Your correspondence, Sir, will be the means of inducing an inquiry among serious minds respecting those solemn points. And that inquiry cannot fail, under God, of accomplishing most beneficial purposes.

Did I talk of resentment, then, while cherishing the hope of so much good from your letters?—Erase every idea of it I beg you, reverend Sir, and in its place insert my best thanks. I do indeed thank you again and again for the services you have hereby wrought, however unintentional on your part. You have done the utmost which could have been expected from a gentleman of your complexion. To have done more, and to have approved of a conduct like mine, so dissimilar in in every point of view as it is from your own, was impossible. The very diversity of our pursuits is enough to have excited your contempt and displeasure. For while the greater part of your life hath been directed in the high walk of literature, to form the character of the reviewer and the historian, mine hath been limited to the low and humble sphere of parochial duties!

Some have observed indeed that Mr. Polwhele might have adopted gentler terms in his anger, which would have been more suitable to his function and ministry. But I have said in answer, pshaw! this is of no consequence. The terms he hath adopted were best suited to his manners, to his good breeding, to the gentleness of his character, and to the *suaviter* of his mind. Every man hath a vocabulary of his own. And this is Mr. Polwhele's? that is all.

But, Sir, after recalling your attention to the contents of your former letter, by way of reminding you of the nature of those obligations you have brought me under for the display of so much courtesy, it is high time for me to make my acknowledgments to you for

the continuance of the same kind of favours, which you have heaped upon me in your second.

To all the enormity of character, with which I stand charged under your impeachment, in the *last* publication; you have now thought proper, in the present, to add some more peculiar appellations, suggested by the same liberality of sentiment. You say, that I am a 'master of finesse;' the resembler 'of a thief:' one who hath 'outmanœuvred you at all points,' &c. And to render my person, if possible, as odious both to the navy and army, as you have before endeavoured to represent me to the church and state, you say, that *prima facie* 'I damn every sailor and soldier to the flames of hell.' (Page 27. Letter II.)

Poor man! poor man! What affections, dark as Erebus must the mind of such an one have to brood over, which can hatch, and bring forth such monstrous productions!

But, Sir, however boundless and implacable your unprovoked malice against me hath been, or may be; I trust in God, he hath given me sufficient grace to be in no danger of being influenced by your principles. Perhaps you may have to learn, Sir, that it is the province of the guilty only, to shrink under unjust accusation. And I am sure, it ought to be, peculiarly their's also, to feel displeasure. None of your charges therefore move me. Neither have they excited in my mind any thing more than a mixture of pity and contempt for the author. No, Sir! All the rage and fury of the correspondence shall be your's. I should blush if any gentleman found occasion to reprove me for a single term in my letters to you, of falsehood or illiberality.

From the particular manner in which you have dated your letter, as well as the language you make use of in opening it, I presume, you meant to convey your contempt of my correspondence, and the haste with which you answered it. 'In a letter (you say)

with which I was honoured by your messenger about an hour ago,' &c. And you date it, 'Manaccan Vicarage, Sep. 3, 1799, one o'clock, A. M.'—By which it should seem that my messenger arrived at *midnight*, and you begun your answer at one in the *morning*. If, however, you meant to convey this idea, (and it is not possible for your readers to conceive what other you mean) unfortunately for keeping up in their minds this notion, you soon after forgot yourself, and date your 3rd page September 25. So that, with all the haste of reply, somewhat more than three weeks elapsed in writing three pages. But Mr. Polwhele is not 'master of finesse!'

A similar trait of character appears in your conduct, as manifested in the 4th page of your letter. You say, 'It was on a retired spot I threw the gauntlet, inviting a chosen few to be spectators of the combat.' Bear with me, Sir, while I examine what you say, by what you did, and then you shall have the pleasure to prove the correspondence.

Your first letter was printed, as appears by your title-page, in London. A very retired spot truly! And the same title-page declares, that it was printed for Cadel and Davies, booksellers, in the Strand. One of the first shops, in one of the first streets in Europe! Your letter bears date, June 1st, 1799. It was advertised on the cover of the Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine for July, and soon after in one or more of the public newspapers. It was reviewed in the same Review and Magazine for the months of August and September: and although but an eighteen-penny pamphlet, the review of it occupied as I have been informed, (for I never read such trash myself) no less than twelve pages, and contained abundantly more in substance than the whole of my reply. So that it engaged, or endeavoured to engage, the public attention for several months together, more or less. And yet in the face of

all this, you say, that 'it was on a retired spot you threw the gauntlet, and invited only a chosen few to be spectators of the conbat.' But Mr. P. is not 'a master of finesse,' neither can it be supposed that that 'lying spirit,' which he says, 'is gone forth among the people,' hath ever reached Manaccan.

There is another curious circumstance, connected with your declaration of the *retired spot* you choose for action, and the *chosen few* you invited to be present at it: I mean in the note of the 3rd page of your letter, in which you say, 'to this very hour, (and that hour you take care to mark as in the 25th of September) not one bookseller or stationer in either county, has, by my order, received a copy; though your answer was dispersed by your emissaries over all the west of England, and among all descriptions of people, within ten days after my letter was first advertised: when neither myself nor friends had seen it in print, and even its existence to people in general, was only made known by your answer.'

Will you be so obliging, Sir, as to explain how my answer, which was not put to the press until the last week in August, could possibly be dispersed within ten days after your letter was first advertised, when, both the public prints, and the Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine had announced your publication in July, : and when the Anti-Jacobin Magazine for August had actually begun the review of your letter. And will you be good enough at the same time to shew to whom the public is indebted for the early review of your letter, since you say at the time my answer appeared, and which was not till the first week in September, neither 'yourself nor your friends had seen your's in print.' This last question will reduce you, I fear, to the disagreeable alternative of calling back those assertions, or confessing (of what the public mind I believe have already but one opinion upon) that your letter was reviewed by

yourself in manuscript, so as to appear nearly at the same time with its publication. If it could be supposed that Mr. P. was 'a master of finesse,' I should be prompted to apprehend that these were among the depths of the art. But as no one will venture to ascribe such a thing to you, I shall expect that the next edition of your letter will notice these circumstances among the errata.

But why so much labour to induce the public to believe, that in the circulation of our correspondence, Mr. P. hath been very supine and inattentive, and Dr. H. very diligent and active? Can you suppose, Sir, that the public will give you credit for first writing and publishing an unprovoked letter of much cruelty against a man who never had offended you, and that then you sat down perfectly regardless whether that letter was read or not? Or can you really imagine, that the public mind would take offence at any exertions on my part, to put the public, as early as possible, in possession of my defence against so rude and violent an assault? It was very natural for me to send my reply in all places whither I supposed your letter had come. But in doing this, I never once advertised it in the public prints, or took any pains to have it circulated, but through the counties of Devon and Cornwall. My letter was printed in Plymouth. Your's in London. Let the world judge who studied most, by this different plan of publishing, that our correspondence should have a local operation.

Your observation on the different degree of merit in our letters, would have been more modest and graceful, coming from any other person but Mr. P. himself. You say, 'my little essay is calculated chiefly for those who have leisure to read and to judge: your three-penny pamphlet is but a trap for ignorance.'

With respect to the merit of your letter as a composition, I very cheerfully leave to the decision of those

who know how to appreciate its value. For mine I feel no solicitude. My reply aimed not at elegance, but truth. It answered every purpose with me to convict you on your own confessions. I set out to prove you insincere both to God and man. And this I fully accomplished. Your subscriptions to the thirty-nine articles, compared with the open avowal of your sentiments, fully proved the former. And your correspondence with me has amply manifested the latter.—More than this I needed not. A more complete triumph no one could desire.

You seem to labour very hard to do away the effects of that letter,* which unfortunately for you, I had in my possession, by accounting for the charges of opinion,

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* You accuse me of stratagem, in suppressing the passage in your letter, which I omitted, as being irrelevant to the subject, and of conveying it to my friends at Falmouth. The best refutation of both will be the publishing of it now: by which the public will instantly perceive, that I could not benefit by its suppression, or its publication: this is the passage which was omitted:—

'In proof of this—look to the English Review.—Accident now leads me to discover, what I had intended ever to keep secret—and what, indeed, I only communicate to you in confidence. The only Review, with which I have the slightest connection, is the English: Murray, with whom I have had some little correspondence, paid me the compliment of submitting to my perusal, a few tracts, poems, &c.—And I have written, I believe, about ten articles; among which I reviewed your sermons—but not, with the most distant idea of the circumstance being ever known to you.'——The reader will now judge the *cui bono* of either publishing or suppressing.

I could wish you had shewn me the same candour in your quotations from my writings. I leave it with every reader of liberality to determine whether a more unfair, a more ungenerous perversion of the design of an author was ever made by man, than you have shewn in your strictures on my 'Appeal to the People of England,' in your note of the 28th page.

And in your animadversions on my 'Three leading Points of the Gospel,' you exhibit the same trait of conduct. The concluding words of the last dialogue in that little work, from the mouth of the parishioner, are these: 'I am comforted by what you say, and begin to hope that as I really feel those evidences of the renewed life, I shall at length attain, through Divine Mercy, in the diligent use of the several means of grace afforded, to a full assurance that Christ is my Saviour.

And how do you construe this? Truly, as follows! 'So your poor parishioner leaves you weighed down by the burthen of his sins, and doubtful when the moment of grace shall arrive to relieve him from that burthen.' (Page 45, 1st Letter.) What a curious proof of candour, and fairness of quotation!

and the differences of sentiment. But, Sir, you take the subject up upon false ground. I never charged you with a change of sentiment. When you wrote your first letter, as when you wrote your last, the sincerity of your mind, I verily believe, was one and the same. It suited Mr. P.'s purpose at one time to compliment, and it suited Mr. P.'s purpose at another to reprove; that's all. I meant not to point out the change from *time*, but the same want of sincerity *under all*. And in following you to the church, I traced the whole to its source. For how should he that is unfaithful to his God, be sincere to man?

I am at a loss, Sir, to discover whether the severity of your sarcasm, respecting my preaching near Truro, is levelled principally against the poor insignificant preacher Dr. H; or against the person and offices of that high and lofty One, whom Mr. P. sometimes is obliged to say, he believes to be, "The Lord and Giver of life."*

You say that you were credibly informed that I preached 'a very indifferent piece of extempore stuff, and pleaded in apology that it was the hasty adoption of a text suggested to me by a friend. This (you say) I confess, excites my surprize. Actuated by the Spirit, or qualified by grace to interpret the scriptures, we may indeed wonder' that the Lord should have suffered 'you to deliver a bad discourse for want of time to digest it.' And after ascribing to me the same principles as those who were "to take no thought how or what they should speak, because it should be given them in the same hour what they should speak," you sum up your raillery in what you thought, no doubt, an admirable stroke of humour, by saying, 'but there was a heaviness perhaps about you which obstructed the ope-

* Nicene Creed.

ration of the Spirit, owing, I presume, to indigestion, since you came among us you know not to preach, but to dine.'

You remind me of him of old, of whom it is said, 'he casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, am not I in sport?" (Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.) But, Sir, the subject is too serious for sport; and too solemn for raillery. You do not presume, I suppose, totally to deny the operations of the blessed Spirit, since it seems you told bishop Ross at your ordination (though both you and he, poor man, from your confessions at that time, knew nothing of his influence on the heart) that you trusted 'the Holy Spirit would assist you in the office;' and sometimes perhaps you pray before your sermon, that the Lord would 'prevent you in all your doings, and further you with his continual help.'

If the wit, therefore, you aim at, be directed against the doctrine of the blessed Spirit's influence in helping our infirmities, and qualifying for his more immediate service; I shall leave you to the very awful enjoyment of a humour, whose termination will be extreme sadness.

But, Sir, if you would confine your mirth to humbler subjects, and let the shaft of your ridicule be wholly directed against me, you shall shoot as long as you please, and laugh as long as you are able, with full impunity.

You were very rightly informed, that I preached 'a very indifferent piece of extempore stuff;' though the information given you concerning my apology for it, was ill-founded. I made no excuse, neither was it then particularly necessary. For all my preachments are truly poor and indifferent, and require continual apologies for every one of them. And I am free to confess to you, Sir, that I have frequent cause to take shame after every sermon, that I have said so little, and that little so poorly.

But notwithstanding all this, if ever I preached a sermon in my life to make me vain, it is the very one of which you and your friends speak so contemptuously, and of which I think so humbly. Do not mistake me however: it is not from its excellence, but from its poverty. Not that it called forth my abilities, but that it gave occasion to call forth your displeasure. Had I never preached that 'indifferent piece of stuff,' your anger, and that of your friends, would not, most probably, have been excited: and if your anger had not been excited, I should not have been so highly honoured as I have since been, in your correspondence: and if this correspondence had never taken place, the discussion of those interesting points of doctrine, which peculiarly distinguish the christian faith, and form the leading articles of our church, would not have taken place. Whereas, now by virtue of my poor preaching, and your violent anger in consequence of it, many serious persons among the clergy, who must find themselves highly interested in the inquiry, will be prompted to read and judge for themselves, and I am too confident to fear, but that the issue of it will be the establishment of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Hence therefore, my sermon, poor and contemptible as it was in itself, yet, by inducing such beneficial consequences, rises into a climax of importance, and will ultimately prove, I am persuaded, the most interesting discourse which I ever delivered.

And do suffer me, Sir, upon this occasion, to call your attention, and that of your friends, (who gave you the information of the poverty of my preaching) to a point of doctrine, which in the heat and fury of your resentment, appears to have been totally overlooked and forgotten by you all. I mean, in that striking display of God's sovereignty, when, by his over-ruling power, he makes men the unconscious instruments of accomplishing the very reverse of what

they intended. When God chooses "foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty;" this manifests a divine ordination more illustriously, than when proportioned effects are induced by proportioned causes. You meant, Sir, in all that you have been doing, to render me ridiculous, and the sacred doctrines which I preach (and to which both you and I have alike subscribed) contemptible. Whereas, every thing you have advanced hath only tended to produce the very opposite to your designs. And this is what scripture calls "God's taking the wise in their own craftiness," Job v. 13. and making even the very "wrath of man to praise him," Ps. vii. 6, 10. "Whoso is wise will ponder these things; and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," Ps. cvii. 43.

I thank you for the information you have afforded me of the countenance and favour shewn my ministry by the orthodox dissenters of Cornwall. It is a very flattering mark of distinction to me, whatever you may think of it, that one minister, as you tell me, should shut up his church, and another walk with me at our's to attend my preaching. And what is the fair and plain inference to be gathered from hence but this, that if all ministers in the establishment preached according to the doctrines to which they have subscribed, meetings (except in particular cases) would be unnecessary.

You may say, if you please, (though every liberal mind must be ashamed to hear it) that 'a real friend to the episcopacy would scarcely take sweet counsel, or walk familiarly in the house of God, with the avowed enemies of our religious establishment.' But I venture to think, that a real follower of the Lord would rejoice to walk to the house of God with any man. What a religion must that be which prompts men to refuse even walking to the house of prayer with others whose

sentiments are not in all points like their own.—If this be your ideas of episcopacy, they are not very enviable. And suffer me to correct you, Sir, in your uncharitable and unwarrantable abuse, when you class the whole body of dissenters in the kingdom as 'avowed enemies of our religious establishment.' You mistake the matter. Many whom I know, and whom I highly esteem, are not enemies to the establishment, but to the *unfaithful ministers* of the establishment: to such (if there are any others) like Mr. Polwhele, who have confidence enough to throw off the mask, and dare openly to avow that they do not believe what they have subscribed.

Men of conscientious principles, whether among the establishment, or among the dissenters, cannot but despise such duplicity; and hence, many have separated from the church, when they have once discovered such a manifest contradiction between her doctrines and the preaching of such ministers.

For my part, Sir, I feel much gratified in the approbation of men of this description. I consider it not so much a tribute of respect to my person, as to my principles. It becomes indeed a compliment to the church itself, to which I belong, and to her most excellent doctrines, as set forth in the articles, homilies, and liturgy. You may, if you please, from opposite principles, bestow your eulogies on persons of different sentiments. And they may, if they please, accept them as complimentary. But pardon me when I add, I should consider Mr. Polwhele's testimony in religion, as more than half decisive that I was wrong, and his approbation on the subject of theology as the most finished reproach.

Either from your misapprehension or misconstruction of what I said in my former letter respecting my late visit into Cornwall, you have been led into another error, which I request may be corrected. You inserted that my journey to the West was for the sole pur-

pose of preaching. I contended on the contrary, (and which all my friends, who knew of my journey, knew for a fact) that this was not the object of my visit. But if Mr. P. or any other man, supposed from hence, that I wished it to be understood that I would not itinerate to preach the gospel, if convenience and opportunity offered, without neglecting the duties of my own parish, this were to mistake my meaning. Gladly would I go from parish to parish, and from one county to another, 'to seek for Christ's sheep,' (as the ordination service enjoins) that are dispersed abroad, and never cease my labour, my care and diligence, until I had done all that was in my power, according to my bounden duty.* But as I told you, the daily care of that part of the fold over which I am placed precludes the opportunity. And this be assured, Sir, is the only prevention. As far as I can make it compatible, with the more immediate claims of my own church, I rejoice in every occasion which offers to publish the gospel in another. So that when you ask me my catechism; 'Have you not preached in the neighbourhood of Plymouth on week days? Did you never preach on a week-day at Egg-Buckland?' &c. &c. I answer, 'yes, verily, and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father who hath called me to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.'

And pardon me yet further, when I add, that of all places, did it come within my reach, Manaccan, with your permission, should be the favourite spot of my itinerancy. I should like, above all things, to take

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* If I might without offence presume to advise, it would be, to request you to read once more this most excellent service of our ordination. And as you tell me that 'you subscribed the articles with Burnet in your hand, and Burnet from that hour hath been your guide;' I would beg you to peruse those articles afresh, exchange Burnet for the bible, you will find your account in it.

wing, and alight on some perch near you; to warble, in the best manner I am able, the sweet notes of the gospel; though you and your friends might, perhaps, think I should but *chatter as a swallow*. Nevertheless I should be very much gratified could I do this, because you tell me that 'though you sometimes moralize with Epictetus, you never have evangelized with Whitfield. I could not suppose, Sir, that you would evangelize with one whom you so much despise as Whitfield; but yet I think, and every one in his sober senses must think the same, that as you profess yourself to be a minister of the gospel, and not the disciple of an heathen moralist, you ought not to have boasted of moralizing in a christian church with an heathen, but rather have confessed that you sometimes evangelized with Christ and his apostles. What a charming representation you have made, Sir, of a christian minister, in the close of the eighteenth century, publicly to tell the world, that you sometimes moralize with Epictetus!

'We lose sight (says bishop Horsley, in the same charge from whence I have borrowed the motto for my title-page, and you are very fond I know of the sayings of bishops) we lose sight of that which is our proper office, to publish the word of reconciliation, to propound terms of peace and pardon to the penitent, when we make no other use of the high commission that we bear, than to come abroad one day in seven dressed in solemn looks, and in the external garb of holiness, to be the apes of Epictetus.'*

In the midst of all your reproaches, I have to thank you, Sir, for reminding me, of what my forgetful heart is but too apt to lose sight of; I mean, my unspeakable obligations to God for his gracious instructions, during a period of near twenty years, since I published my first little work, 'the Devout Soldier.' When I look

* See Bishop of St. David's Charge for 1790.

back and consider how divine grace hath brought me on my way, I take shame in the reflection, how little my improvements have been under so many and long opportunities. It appears by what you say, that it is a subject of joy to your heart that you have felt no change, for you tell me, that 'your religious sentiments have been uniform and consistent.' My rejoicing on the contrary is, that in my instance the promise is fulfilled, "the Lord hath brought the blind by a way that they knew not," (Isa. xlii. 16.)

I have no cause to blush in acknowledging, that at the time I published that sermon, my ideas of the great and essential doctrines of the gospel were faint and indistinct to what they are now. It is my mercy however to see, that in that very sermon, if there are no great marks of the divine teachings, there are no blind and presumptuous reasonings against them. And though unconscious at the time, like the patriarch at Bethel, from whom or from what cause the manifestation came, yet I might truly say at my ordination, that I was *inwardly* moved to take upon me the office of the ministry, since no *outward* cause could operate, as I had no other prospect in that period than of living and dying a curate.

And with respect to an advance in the knowledge of divine things, I presume Mr. Polwhele doth not mean to intimate to the contrary; for if twenty years be not supposed productive of improvement, to what purpose is the apostle's precept of "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" (2 Peter iii. 18.)

But leaving these considerations, I would ask, from what possible connection with those sayings is it that you can draw that very cruel and unjust inference which you do, when you say, that though in that sermon I then contemplated the 'bended knee, and the uplifted eye of the soldier with admiration, yet now I damn every soldier and sailor to the flames of hell?' Is there a

single sentence or word in any of my preachings or writings which hath even the most remote tendency to favour such a construction? Do you mean to hold me forth both to the army and navy as meriting their execrations; and do you indeed intend to expose me to any personal evil which any of either order, stimulated by your representations, might be prompted to attempt? Is this the reverend Mr. Polwhele, who tells the world, that 'nothing can afford comfort in the hour of death but the consciousness of having done justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God;' and yet in the most wanton and unprovoked manner, and in direct defiance of all these principles, attempts the destruction of one whom he never saw? If every idle word which the thoughtless and inconsiderate frame of the mind, in the unguarded moment gives birth to, be yet amenable in the day of judgment, what must that man have to answer for who sits down with a degree of malignity, premeditately first to write, and afterwards to publish whole pamphlets of malicious calumnies, neither of which in a single instance can he substantiate or prove? Do you really think, Sir, that because I make no appeal to any earthly court, that no cognizance will be taken of it before an heavenly tribunal?

I shall not be accused, I hope, by a generous public of unnecessary vanity in wiping off this foul reproach, if I bring forward certain facts, which otherwise might have savoured of ostentation. It is the only way, perhaps, to repel a charge of this nature, by shewing what my conduct hath been opposed to what Mr. Polwhele saith.—And if a life of continual labours, and unremitting fatigue in the ministry, can be considered as the best evidences of christian love; perhaps it may be found in the end of the day, that Dr. Hawker hath no reason to shrink from a comparison with Mr. Polwhele in services rather to promote the eternal welfare of his fellow creatures, than to pronounce their destruction.

One circumstance in point, I would beg permission

through the medium of this letter, to bring before the public, which when done, I shall leave to the comment of every candid reader.

In the close of the year 1797, I accepted the deputy chaplaincy of the garrison in Plymouth, and with no other view, I solemnly declare, than that of having the door of the army opened, as far as my province of duty might extend, to speak to the military on the great truths of salvation.—By virtue of this office it became a branch of my duty to visit the sick in the hospitals, both in the garrison in Plymouth, and the military hospital at Stoke Village, which is somewhat near two miles distant from the garrison. And in consequence of this appointment, during the two years which I have held this office, I have for the greater part of that time, once in every week, both in summer's heat and winter's rain, discharged the duty of visiting those hospitals. In the execution of which, at the Stoke hospital particularly, (while the sick troops continued in that temporary building, and before the new hospital was opened near Stoke church,) I have performed divine service, in prayers and expounding the scriptures, sometimes in the *three* distinct wards of that hospital, and always in *two* of them, when the other was not in use, amidst the floating miasmata of the typhus, and the effluvia of other disorders. And this I have done without any kind of emolument whatever, the whole profits of the appointment being from the first moment in which I entered upon it to the present hour, regularly paid over by me, as soon as received, to the gentleman who hath done me the honour of assisting me in the duties of my church, while I have been engaged in the duties of the garrison. And that the testimony of these facts may not rest upon my bare assertion, the Rev. Mr. Sullock, who is the clergyman connected with me in this service, hath at my request, very kindly consented to subjoin

his certificate to satisfy the public mind upon this point.* I now very cheerfully leave it to every man's candour to determine whether such services can be supposed to correspond with Mr. Polwhele's cruel expression, that 'I damn every soldier and sailor to the flames of hell.'

But, Sir, it is high time, in order that our correspondence may not swell unnecessarily, to drop the subject, as it merely concerns the persons of such things as Dr. Hawker, or even Mr. Polwhele. Though you charge me again as you say, 'with indecorum, with indecency, and that contempt of order which characterizes the wild itinerant:' and though I have proved you to be 'insincere both towards God and man;' yet setting aside every thing that is personal out of the subject, the great question to be discussed, and the great ultimatum of our correspondence, respects the fundamentals of the doctrines of the church itself.

You say, that 'to accompany me in the examination of the articles, would be an endless work.' But why should you think it an endless work, or wish to decline

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* *Plymouth, Jan.* 11, 1800.

DEAR SIR,

As you are very conscious that since your connexion with me in the department of the chaplain's duty in the garrison, the whole of the emoluments arising from the appointment hath been your's, and that I have never profited a single farthing; I shall esteem it a favour in you to certify this to me by letter, as circumstances have arisen in the second attack made upon my character by Mr. Polwhele, to bring this account before the public.

I am, with all due regard, dear Sir,
Your faithful friend and servant,
ROBERT HAWKER.

To the Rev. Mr. Sullock, Garrison.

Citadel, Jan. 11*th*, 1800.

DEAR SIR,

I shall be always ready, and with great cheerfulness, to satisfy any person who wishes the information, that the whole income of the deputy chaplaincy of the garrison, I have constantly received from the first moment that I engaged with you, to the present hour.

I am, dear Sir, with great regard,
Your faithful friend and servant,
G. SULLOCK.

Rev. Dr. Hawker.

a subject of this nature, if its investigation brings our contest to an issue?

You say, 'I feel myself under no personal obligation to discuss the subject with you, as almost the whole body of the clergy, from the archbishop to the curate, are implicated in the same charge with myself.' Why, Sir, this in my esteem is the very reason for discussing it. For if almost the whole body of the clergy are implicated in the charge, surely it is high time to inquire whether they are guilty or not? Most unquestionably, Sir, you are not the only person concerned. Every man in the church is highly interested. And whether an archbishop, or a curate, as both must have subscribed to the articles, if either of them were not convinced before subscription that they were right, both are alike guilty of prevarication and duplicity. It is not the difference of rank which lessens the enormity of the crime, but rather aggravates it.

You say that Archdeacon Paley hath made it appear that the intention of the legislature in demanding subscription to the articles, was only to exclude 'the abettors of popery, anabaptists, and puritans; and that though these three denominations of persons ought not to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles; all others may.' This I deny in toto. And though you think that 'the archdeacon hath said enough to satisfy every man' on this subject, 'who is neither an enthusiast nor an hypocrite:' yet were it not that I do not choose to copy after either the manners or the liberality of Mr. Polwhele, I should venture to think that the archdeacon hath advanced no one argument to satisfy *any man* on the point, except the knave or the fool. The former, for ought I know, might find his worldly profit too deeply interested not to profess himself satisfied. And the latter may want discernment to detect the fallacy of the archdeacon's reasoning. But with all others I think it impossible that a covering so flimsy as the

archdeacon hath thrown over the subject, should for a moment conceal the truth, or serve to satisfy the mind of any truly concientious person.

But, Sir, this point is not to be determined to the public satisfaction by what Mr. Polwhele saith, or what Dr. Hawker thinks. The grand question is, what is the fact itself? Is subscription to the articles a serious thing, or is it not? Or hath Archdeacon Paley really advanced any substantial arguments to prove that the articles of the church of England are in themselves nugatory; and that a subscription to them is only demanded by the legislature to act as a fence against the admission into the church, the abettors of popery, anabaptists, and puritans?

This is the point to be determined. And happily for our controversy, it is a point which can be very easily determined. By a reference to what Archdeacon Paley hath said on the subject, a very moderate degree of attention will soon discover whether the archdeacon be right or wrong.

I have borrowed the archdeacon's writings on this subject, for the express purpose of bringing them forth to public view, through the medum of this letter, that by a fair reference to them, not only you and I may form *our* opinions, but what is of equal importance, every reader may form *his*. And in the accomplishment of this design, I shall not do as you have done by me, collect unfair quotations from different pages, and throw them into one view, so as to make an author speak the reverse of what he intended. But I will bring before the reader the *whole* of what the archdeacon hath advanced on this subject, *verbatim et literatim*, in his 22nd chapter of the 1st vol. of his 'Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy,' entitled 'Subscription to Articles of Religion.'* And when I

* I have copied from the octavo edition, printed in 1794, page 218.

have brought forward what the archdeacon hath thought proper to advance on this point, I shall assume the freedom of making my observations; and then leave the whole to the impartial decision of the reader, with whom the truth rests.

Archdeacon Paley opens the subject on subscription to the articles of religion in these words:—

'Subscription to articles of religion, although no more than a declaration of the subscriber's assent, may properly enough be considered in connection with the subject of oaths, because it is governed by the same rule of interpretation:

'Which rule is the *animus imponentis.*

'The inquiries therefore concerning subscription will be *quis imposuit, et quo animo.*

'The bishop who receives the subscription is not the imposer, any more than the cryer of a court, who administers the oath to the jury and witnesses is the person that imposes it; nor consequently is the private opinion or interpretation of the bishop of any signification to the subscriber one way or other.

'The compilers of the thirty-nine articles are not to be considered as the imposers of subscription, any more than the framer or drawer up of a law is the person than enacts it.

'The legislature of the 13th Elizabeth is the imposer, whose intention the subscriber is bound to satisfy.'

Thus far the archdeacon. Before we proceed, let us pause to make observation on what is here advanced.

The archdeacon hath laid down a very just foundation in the opening of this subject by the remark which he hath made, that 'subscription to the articles of religion, although no more than a declaration, yet may properly enough be considered under the nature of an oath.' I join issue with him most heartily in this opinion. Subscription, in the solemn manner this is done, and upon the most solemn occasion for which it

is required; and above all, being, as is supposed, not only made in the presence, but immediately directed to the majesty of that Being into whose service the subscriber voluntarily enters, and by this subscription intimates his apprehension of the principles by which he means to regulate his conduct in that service; such a subscription as this becomes equal to the nature of the most solemn oath whatever. I not only therefore unite in the same sentiment with the archdeacon on this point, but I venture to add to it another remark, and to observe that that man, be who it may, who considers himself not bound by a subscription of this very solemn kind, would feel no greater tye upon his conscience from the administration of the most solemn oath whatever.

I as perfectly agree with Archdeacon Paley, in the observation which he makes, respecting the bishop and compilers of the thirty-nine articles. Very evident must it be to every one, that as they are not the imposers of subscription; neither of them can possess authority to interpret their meaning. The bishop simply acts *ex officio* to see the law fulfilled in the article of subscription. 'His private opinion,' as Archdeacon Paley justly observes, 'is of no signification to the subscriber, one way or other.' Thus far the archdeacon and I agree. But in the observation he hath made respecting the inquiries, as to the intention of the legislature in demanding subscription, the archdeacon and I agree but in part.

He says; 'the inquiry concerning subscription will be, *quis imposuit, et quo animo*;' that is, who imposed this subscription, and with what design is it imposed? This is however but one part of the subject to be examined into. I perfectly agree with him that the inquiry by whom this law was imposed, and for what end and design is it imposed, is a most essential point for every subscriber clearly to understand before he

subscribes. And I as perfectly join issue with the archdeacon when he says, that 'the intention of the legislature the subscriber is bound to satisfy.' But I no less contend, at the same time, that this is considering the subject but in part. The intention of the subscriber in subscription, and the examination whether he can and will faithfully perform what he subscribes; these are points equally important to be taken into the account previous to subscription.

And this view of the subject is so very obvious, that it can require no depth of discernment to discover its propriety. Put the case, that a promissory note of hand for a thousand pounds, or any given sum was brought to Archdeacon Paley, or Mr. Polwhele, to be indorsed; would either of those gentlemen think it sufficient to subscribe their hands to it, whatever might be the proposer's intention, without considering at the same time their own? Would they consider any reasoning on the part of the proposer sufficiently satisfactory to induce them to accept the proposal as a matter *pro forma;* and set their name to the promise, with an assurance, that there was annexed to it no responsibility? Let any one make application of this to the subject now under consideration, and the inference will be the same.

But let us hear what the archdeacon hath further to offer. His next words are:—

'They who contend, that nothing less can justify subscription to the thirty-nine articles, than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose, that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any who observed the incurable diversity of human opinion upon all subjects short of demonstration.'

Here the archdeacon and I differ most essentially. If individuals are to frame their opinions concerning laws of any kind, and those opinions are to become with them the standard of decision; nothing can be more obvious, than that not only human laws, but the divine, would soon be rendered altogether uncertain and nugatory. Then the ten commandments, as well as the thirty-nine articles, would be subject to the different interpretation of different men, and the design would in a great measure be done away. But such notions can arise in nothing but the fallacy of human reasoning. Whatever is the plain and obvious sense of the thirty-nine articles, and such as every honest and unbiassed mind would accept them under, this unquestionably is to form the lexicon of interpretation. The legislature considers them what they really are, perfectly plain and intelligible. It doth not ask the opinion, therefore, of the subscriber, concerning the controverted points, but hath set down its own standard of decision on those points. And the simple question with the legislature is, will you subscribe to them, or will you not? If you do, you are supposed to have the same opinion with the legislature; neither can there be a shadow of an argument brought forward to shew, that any subscriber can be at liberty to interpret the sense of a single article, different from the plain and most obvious intention which that article bears.

But who would imagine that Archdeacon Paley, after the above observation, should immediately add, 'if the authors of the law did not intend this, what did they intend?'

Who saith the authors of the law did not intend this? No one but Archdeacon Paley, I hope. I say they did intend it. And I not only say they did intend it, but I will prove it also. And so confident am I of my ability to accomplish what I promise, that I venture to rest the issue of the whole controversy on this deci-

sion. I beg the Rev. Mr. Polwhele to keep this promise of mine in view, and in its proper place I will take care faithfully to fulfil it. But let me first give all due attention to the archdeacon's observation.

'They who contend,' says Archdeacon Paley, 'that nothing less can justify subscription to the thirty-nine articles than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose,' &c. &c.

And having set down these premises of his own forming, he instantly leaps to a conclusion, as if the point was absolutely determined in his favour, and cries out; 'If the authors of the law did not intend this, what did they intend?'

'They intended,' he adds, 'to exclude from offices in the church,

'1. All abettors of popery:

'2. Anabaptists, who were at that time a powerful party on the continent:

'3. The puritans, who were hostile to an episcopal constitution: and

'4. In general the members of such leading sects, or foreign establishments, as threatened to overthrow our own.

'Whoever finds himself comprehended within these descriptions, ought not to subscribe.* Nor can a subscriber to the articles take advantage of any latitude which our rule may seem to allow, who is not first convinced that he is truly and substantially satisfying the intention of the legislature.'

Thus far the archdeacon.† Now let us once more attend to the justness and propriety of his observations.

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* Archdeacon Paley doth not go so far as Mr. Polwhele, for he adds, 'but all others may.'

† That I may omit nothing of the whole chapter of the archdeacon's on subscription, though the remaining part is not connected with my subject, I have here subjoined it.

'During the present state of ecclesiastical patronage, in which private individuals are permitted to impose teachers upon parishes, with which they are

He here asserts, without adding the vestige of an authority for it, that the intention of the legislature in imposing subscription to the thirty-nine articles, was only to exclude from offices in the church four classes of persons. But if this had been really the case, how astonishing is it to discover that the articles themselves have no reference whatever to the characters intended to be excluded by them, (papists excepted) which could have particularly operated to this purpose!

And can it be supposed by any man of common sense, that the intention of the legislature, in insisting upon subscription to the articles, was only directed to this object, and yet that the very point itself is not even mentioned?

Doth Archdeacon Paley really believe that this was the great design for which the articles were framed, and for which subscription to them ever since hath been invariably demanded?

Doth Archdeacon Paley really believe that the purpose of the legislature is fully answered, provided that the four classes of persons he describes are kept out of the church?

I wish upon those principles he had been kind enough to have explained, why it is, that upon every renewed instance of preferment in the church, the person receiving it is obliged to 'read himself in,' as it is called, by publicly reading every one of the articles before God, in the face of the congregation.

I can have no other conception, I confess, (and I should venture to think no man of common sense could either) but that this is enjoined with the express view that thereby the person advancing in preferment, is

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often little or not at all connected, some limitation of the patron's choice may be necessary, to prevent unedifying contentions between neighbouring teachers, or between the teachers and their respective congregations. But this danger, if it exist, may be provided against with equal effect, by converting the articles of faith into articles of peace.

supposed to testify afresh his perfect approbation of the whole, and every separate article, and of his intentions of conforming to them in all the subsequent acts of his ministry.

But on the presumption that the archdeacon is right, and that the articles were only framed to keep out the characters he mentions, what a curious circumstance would it be to hear one of our bishops questioning a young man coming to him from the university for orders; Are you an abettor of popery? are you an anabaptist? are you a puritan? And if the youth answered in the negative, (as well he might) that then he might fancy himself at liberty to sign thirty-nine articles on the most solemn points of doctrine, whether he had a conviction of their truth, or whether he had not?

Mr. Polwhele indeed might have said upon this occasion, as he hath to me upon another, 'I abhor Calvinism.' But this, according to Archdeacon Paley's maxim, would not be material. Though the doctrines of the articles, and the liturgy of the church are wholly Calvinistical; yet this would be of no consequence. He might safely leap over the fence, for it is thrown up only to the abettor of popery, and anabaptists, and puritans, &c. And hence an arian, or socinian, might, in this case, sign the 1st article, as well as a hater of Calvinism the 17th. For no one would accuse the one or the other of popery or puritanism.

If Archdeacon Paley really reasoned himself into the belief of such opinions before that he attempted to reason the world into the belief of them, however Mr. P. may declare himself convinced, I will assume the confidence to say, that it can only be for the want of attention, in examining his arguments, or inclination to receive the truth, that he should have any other follower. For taking up the subject on his own pre-

mises, I venture to assert, that enough hath been advanced by me in contradiction, to operate on the mind of every man of candour, in throwing to the ground the whole of his hypothesis.

But I have not yet done with the archdeacon. I have still in reserve another view of the subject, which I should think even Mr. P. himself cannot steadily look at undaunted. Suppose, Sir, that I can produce an authority which shall at once, and in the most decided manner prove, that the intention of the legislature, in demanding subscription to the thirty-nine articles, was not directed merely to keep out improper persons from the church, but to ensure (as far as a solemn subscription could ensure) the soundness of orthodox principles in those who came in?

This, Sir, I can accomplish. And this is what I had in view in the promise I made you. You will not deny, I hope, but that every man is the best interpreter of his own will and meaning.—And the will and meaning of the compilers of the articles cannot be better or more clearly expressed than is done by them in the very title-page of the articles themselves. If you will have the goodness to turn to the thirty-nine articles, which may be found, I believe, in almost every folio edition of the book of common prayer, you will find the real intention of them, expressed in those plain words:

'Articles agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy, in the convocation holden at London, in the year 1562, for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the stablishing of consent touching true religion: reprinted by his majesty's commandment, with his royal declaration prefixed thereunto.'

You will be pleased to observe, that in this title prefixed to the articles, there is not a word intimated about the abettors of popery, or the like, but they are

said to be framed for the express purpose only of avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent, touching true religion.

And to prevent all possible misconceptions, the title of the articles is followed with the 'king's declaration,' which one should have thought with modest minds, would have been sufficiently satisfactory to silence every doubt.

That the reader of our correspondence may have no trouble in referring to the book of common prayer for the proof of what I say, I have requested my printer to insert in this place, a copy of his majesty's declaration, as it stands prefixed at the head of the articles themselves.

HIS MAJESTY'S DECLARATION.

Being by God's ordinance, according to our just title, defender of the faith, and supreme governor of the church, within these our dominions, we hold it most agreeable to this our kingly office, and our own religious zeal to conserve and maintain the church committed to our charge, in unity of true religion, and in the bond of peace; and not to suffer unnecessary disputations, altercations, or questions to be raised, which may nourish faction both in the church, and common wealth. We have therefore, upon mature deliberation, and with the advice of so many of our bishops as might conveniently be called together, thought fit to make this declaration following:—

That the articles of the church of England, (which have been allowed and authorized heretofore, and which our clergy generally have subscribed unto) do contain the true doctrine of the church of England, agreeable to God's word: which we do therefore ratify and confirm, requiring all our loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession thereof, and prohibiting the least difference from the said articles; which to that end we command to be new printed, and this our declaration to be published therewith.

That we are supreme governor of the church of England: and that if any difference arise about the external policy, concerning the injunctions, canons, and other constitutions whatsoever thereto belong, the clergy in their convocation is to order and settle them, having first obtained leave under our broad seal so to do: and we approving their said ordinances and constitutions: providing that none be made contrary to the laws and customs of the land.

That out of our princely care, that the churchmen may do the work

which is proper unto them, the bishops and clergy, from time to time in convocation, upon their humble desire, shall have license under our broad seal to deliberate of, and to do all such things, as being made plain by them, and assented unto by us, shall concern the settled continuance of the doctrine and discipline of the church of England, now established; from which we will not endure any varying, or departing in the least degree.

That for the present, though some differences have been ill raised, yet we take comfort in this, that all clergymen within our realm, have always most willingly subscribed to the articles established; which is an argument to us, that they all agree in the true, usual, literal meaning of the said articles; and that even in those curious points, in which the present differences lie, men of all sorts take the articles of the church of England, to be for them; which is an argument again, that none of them intend any desertion of the articles established.

That therefore in these both curious and unhappy differences, which have for so many hundred years, in different times and places, exercised the church of Christ, we will, that all further curious search be laid aside, and these disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in the holy scriptures, and the general meaning of the articles of the church of England, according to them. And that no man hereafter shall either print or preach to draw the articles aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.

That if any public reader in either of our universities, or any head or master of a college, or any other person respectively in either of them, shall affix any new sense to any article, or shall publicly read, determine, or hold any public disputation, or suffer any such to be held either way, in either the universities or colleges respectively; or if any divine in the universities shall preach or print any thing either way, other than is already established in convocation with our royal assent; he or they, the offenders, shall be liable to our displeasure, and the church's censure in our commission ecclesiastical, as well as any other: and we will see there shall be due execution upon them.

Now, Sir, if you will condescend to remark the leading points of this declaration of his majesty, you will find, that the articles were not framed, as Archdeacon Paley asserts, to keep out of the church the abettors of popery only, but to 'prevent altercations and disputes within:' that his majesty considered the articles of the church of England as containing 'true doctrine, agreeable to God's word;' and that as such, his majesty re-

quires 'all his loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession thereof.' That no one hereafter should either 'print or preach to draw the articles aside any way, but submit to them in the plain and full meaning thereof.' And that if any 'public reader, or head or master of college, or any other person' should affix any new sense to any article, the offender should be liable to the king's displeasure. And that the king would see there should be due execution done.

How Archdeacon Paley, or archdeacon any body else, in the face of this plain declaration of his majesty, and in defiance of the punishment threatened to a contempt of that authority, could presume to set up his opinion to the contrary, is to me, I confess, matter of the greatest astonishment; and only to be equalled by what Mr. Polwhele hath asserted, that all who are not abettors of popery, &c. may with safety subscribe.

You may, Sir, compliment the archdeacon's sagacity, and he may feel gratified that his work hath run through many editions. But with all the contempt you are pleased to throw upon my methodism, believe me, I would not be the author of this chapter on 'subscription to the articles of religion,' for all the temporalities of an archdeaconry; no, nor for all the emoluments of the whole church of England, put them altogether.

And suffer me, Sir, amidst the commendations, which report saith you are receiving from great folks, in consequence of your attacks of me; to remind you, that when those compliments shall be followed with more substantial favours; and you come to 'bear your blushing honours thick upon you,' in being stalled or canonized in some cathedral, (and sainted you might have been perhaps, for such services, had you fortunately belonged to another church) as you must again subscribe to those articles, suffer me to remind you, that there are two or three leading particulars concerning them, worthy your most serious regard.

First—I beg you to recollect what Archdeacon Paley hath said, that subscription to the articles carries with it the nature and solemnity of an oath. Do not forget this. That he saith moreover, the bishop, no more than the cryer of a court, hath authority to interpret the sense of any one article by his private opinion. Pray remember this also. And forget not the archdeacon's observation when he saith, that the intention of the legislature in imposing subscription to the articles, the subscriber is bound to fulfil. I beg you not to overlook these observations.

And secondly—While you pay this respect to the archdeacon's remarks, let me further beg you at the same time, not to lose sight of what the articles themselves express in the title-page; that they are expressly formed for the purpose of avoiding diversities of opinion respecting matters of faith. And under this particular, I would request you more especially to keep in remembrance his majesty's declaration concerning them; and forget not that though the mildness of the present happy government, doth not carry into execution the threatenings which are there added to the wilful perversion of the articles; yet the law itself is as much existing as ever, and as capable of being enforced.

And lastly, and above all; before you take the pen into your hand to subscribe the articles once more, call to mind, I beseech you, that there is one present also to receive your subscription, beside the bishop and his clerks, whose observation is of more consequence than that of all mankind.

And if, Sir, with all those solemn considerations in view, and after the open avowal you have made of your sentiments respecting the articles, you still find yourself at liberty to sign them afresh; though you may advance to the highest order of our church, you will advance but the more to excite my pity and commi-

seration. I shall look up to the dangerous pinnacle on which you stand, not with envy, I assure you, but with sorrow.—What your feelings may be I know not, but according to my apprehension, the trifling and momentary enjoyment is purchased at a price infinitely too dear, which connects with it many painful reflections now, and yet more awful ones to follow, in the prospect of that day, "when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." (Rom. ii. 16.)

You bring me to my catechism again when you say, 'let me ask you, what think you of a passage in our church catechism, 'the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken?' ' 'If (you add) you understand this passage literally, you are evidently a transubstantialist. But as I presume you are not, you cannot understand the passage literally. According to your own judgment therefore, you prevaricate; you are guilty of duplicity.'

I know not in this correspondence, which hath excited my astonishment most, the temerity with which you first entered into a controversy on points of theology; or your incompetency to carry it on after that you had entered. In this observation on the catechism, besides the additional proof it affords of your avowed duplicity concerning the doctrines of our church, you manifest a complete ignorance of one of its most important truths. Yes, Sir, I do accept the passage in its literal sense, and yet I am no transubstantialist. And would you condescend to attend the rehearsal of the church catechism in our sunday school, I would depute one of our little scholars to explain to you the passage, which is in itself too obvious to require a greater extent of learning.

The church itself indeed hath rendered it so plain, that her own words are sufficient to convey her meaning. For while she expressly declares that bread and wine are only outward signs of an inward and spiritual

grace, the body and blood of Christ are said to be verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper. Observe, Sir, it is the *faithful* which are said verily to eat of the body and blood of Christ. For 'the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, (as the 29th article expresses it) although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ.' And (as the 28th article explains what is meant by feeding on Christ) 'the body of Christ is said to be given, taken, and eaten in the supper only, after an heavenly and spiritual manner.'

The elements made use of in the ordinance are simply bread and wine. And bread and wine they will remain for ever, while unused, or until perished in using; notwithstanding the hands of a thousand bishops or priests were piously elevated over them. But, Sir, that the *faithful*, that is, truly regenerated souls really feed upon the body and blood of Christ by faith, is a doctrine which derives not its authority from the church catechism, but the church catechism derives it from the express words of Christ.

Had you read our Lord's memorable conversation with the Jews upon this very subject, as recorded in the 6th chapter of John's gospel, you would have there learnt, that the Lord Jesus not only declares himself to be the living bread to his people, and the bread of life which came down from heaven, of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever; but that he insists so much upon this very point of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, as essential to all the purposes of life, that "except a man doth eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, he hath no life in him." See John vi. *passim.*

You may probably, upon this occasion, as the Jews did of old, cry out, "how can this man give us his flesh

to eat?" But remember, that your want of apprehension is no argument against the credibility of the fact itself. Souls truly regenerated by the Spirit of God, are brought forth into action, and are as conscious of spiritual life, and spiritual wants and desires, as the body is in the exercise of its natural faculties. They have their appetites, their affections, their conflicts, their pains and pleasures, spiritually considered, and suited to their spiritual apprehensions, as much as the body to its corporeal feelings.

Hence, while unregenerated persons are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins;" to be "past feeling;" having "eyes and see not, and ears and hear not," and the like: the soul of a truly regenerated christian is described as being "born again," and become a "new creature in Christ Jesus:" and in consequence thereof hath new senses corresponding to this new creation. The *eye* is said to be enlightened to "see what is the hope of his calling." The *ear* to "hear the voice of Christ," and which "none but his sheep hear." And the *mouth* is said to "taste of the Lord's graciousness," and "as a new-born babe to desire the sincere milk of the word to grow thereby."

The ordinance therefore of the Lord's supper (as indeed every other means of grace) is designed as a medium of conveyance to the soul, that while the *outward* senses of the body are arrested and engaged by objects suited to their natural powers, the *inward* faculties of the soul may be excited by their spiritual apprehension to the real enjoyment of the great object intended. And hence, while the nominal professors of the gospel, who attend the ordinance of the supper, eat of the bread, and drink of the cup, and are unconscious of ought beside; spiritual worshippers feed by faith on the body and blood of Christ. Like the Israelites of old, of whom it is said, that while eating of the same spiritual meat, and drinking of the same spi-

ritual drink, "they all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them," and that rock was Christ. So the pure seed of Israel now, find real communion with the Lord to be, what the apostle declared it, "the cup of blessing which they bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ; and the bread which they break, is the communion of the body of Christ," 1 Cor. x. and from the same principle. Because they are united to Christ by a living faith, (or to use the words of our church) 'they dwell in Christ, and Christ in them; they are one with Christ, and Christ with them.' They live *on* him, as the branch on the vine, John xv. 1. They are united *to* him, as stones in the building, Eph. ii. 20, &c. And they derive all spiritual life *from* him as the stream from the fountain.

If these truths are unknown to you, Sir, and to those of your party, who, from being ignorant what vital, experimental religion means, rest in a *form*, while denying the *power* of godliness: the apostle Paul hath fully assigned the reason, and a very awful one it is. "The natural man (he saith) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14.

And so you think, Sir, that you are as firm a trinitarian as myself. Indeed it might be so, if historical or hearsay evidence formed the character. But had you attended to what the apostle Paul hath said, you would have learnt, "that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3. And as you do not profess to have derived any teaching from him, it is plain, that your apprehension of this glorious doctrine can have no foundation of this kind to rest upon.

Perhaps you have to learn that there is a faith of the head, which is the mere effect of reading or study, or of human testimony, totally distinguished from that of

the heart, which scripture declares to be the sole "gift of God," Phil. i. 29. And this is the faith which the apostle James speaks of in his admirable epistle. A mere historical faith, the result only of human reason, or tradition; untaught by the Spirit of God, unfounded in divine influences; and consequently, as the apostle justly observes, unprofitable and vain. Very different from this is that faith which the apostle Paul uniformly represents in all his writings. A faith which is in the heart, the operation of the Spirit of God, and is productive of all its blessed properties. And had these just distinctions in the principle itself, together with the different object each apostle had in view, when describing faith, been attended to, what volumes would have been spared the world, in the childish attempt to reconcile the supposed difference between those inspired writers, who, in fact, never differed at all.

Whether your belief in the doctrine of the trinity be of the historical kind, remains with you to look into. But, Sir, as I bless God mine is not founded in this principle, I feel no apprehension in what you have observed, that 'I shall expire at last an atheist:' or what your oracle Bishop Lavington hath advanced, of the transition from 'fanaticism to atheism.' Alas! poor man, what a faith was his! Not that faith, I fear, which is "the gift of God;" for had he known this, he would have known also, that a transition from religion to infidelity is impossible. Peter would have told him that "they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. And Jeremiah (not to mention any other) would have taught him, that the security of the faithful is shut up in God's absolute promises. "I will not turn away from them to do them good: but I will put my fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.

And now, Sir, I believe that I have replied to every thing in your Letter excepting some unnoticed instances

of personal abuse. But these are of no concern. I should not indeed have regarded a single circumstance of this kind, had it not been from necessity, in their being so interwoven with the main subject of your letter, that they were inseparable from it. For it is an invariable maxim with me, never to make answer to subjects of mere abuse. I never read them indeed, (unless in your instance) much less think of making reply to them. It is enough with me, when those friends, in whose judgment I confide, have read them, and informed me, that they have none of those characters with which that "wisdom which is from above" is distinguished; but, on the contrary, evidently bear those *three* decisive marks, which the apostle hath pointed out in the wisdom which is from beneath, James iii. 15. This supersedes the necessity of a reply. They form indeed the best reply to themselves; and, like that reptile, which carries in the substance of her body an oil, which men of medical skill extract, as the best antidote to her own poison; so, in the entrails of such writings, every one of discernment can discover somewhat of an emollient to counteract the effect of their own malignity.

You may therefore, Sir, write if you please, as many volumes as you have lines, while you confine your satire to the person of Dr. Hawker. Your *Anecdotes of Methodism*, or any other religious jest book you shall think proper to publish, will never call forth any thing more than my pity for the author. But as I told you before, (for I make a very nice distinction between the abuse of my person, and the abuse of the holy faith I profess,) if you or any of your party dare to sport with the sacred doctrines which you and they, as well as myself have subscribed; while I can hold a pen, I will, under God's assured help, defend his truths against all opposition.

But before you go further, and proceed to treat such solemn subjects with lightness and ridicule, I would

intreat you for your own sake to pause one moment, and reflect on what the apostle John hath said of the "sin that is unto death," and for which he intimates that no prayer is to be made. It may well merit your most solemn consideration how nearly that man is treading on the confines of it, who ventures to throw into one indiscriminate mass, the whole of experimental religion as the effect of enthusiasm and hypocrisy.

In taking my leave of you I cannot, I dare not indeed adopt similar terms to your's. For having held me up, as you have done in both your letters, as unworthy to live and unfit to die, you conclude your *first* letter in telling me, that 'as our object is one and the same, though treading different paths, yet if sincere, we shall meet in the road to salvation.' And in this *second* favour, though 'fearing that I shall go out of the world in a puff, as an atheist;' yet you add, 'may the Almighty grant that no such fate be your's, and may he receive both you and me into the arms of his mercy.'

Now, Sir, with all the hypocrisy you charge me with, I dare not imitate what you perhaps think to be very charitable, by complimenting man's hopes at the expense of God's truth. The man who dies an atheist, scripture affords no encouragement to pray for, and therefore such pretensions are vain.

I shall deal much more faithful with you. For I tell you, and that very plainly, that while treading such different paths, it is impossible, consistent with God's truth, that we shall ever meet in the road to salvation. That decisive and unalterable declaration of the Lord Jesus, throws to the ground such false hopes: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And in what that regeneration consists, the same blessed gospel declares. They who are the happy partakers of it, are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

You may take refuge under the different interpreta-

tions of Archbishop Secker, or an hundred more archbishops; or doctors Ibbott and Clark, or a thousand more such doctors. But, (if as you tell me, 'their ideas, and even their expressions upon regeneration you have brought forward upon the subject,') as they differ from those of Christ and his apostles, they are false, and therefore not to be regarded. I do not, as you say, class such writers with 'school-boys in the first rudiments of learning;' for school-boys, if beginning to learn right, will make some proficiency. But those err in the elementary principles, and therefore are *blind guides.* They are literally the *blind leading the blind,* and you know who hath said where the final fall must be.

I only add, reverend Sir, that it will give me great pleasure to hear that you are come under a better teacher, and that "God hath given you repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

I am,

REV. SIR,

Your's, &c.

ROBERT HAWKER.

LETTER III.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
September 29, 1800.

REV. SIR,

It was not until the latter end of the last month that I heard of your having announced to the public a *third* Letter on the subject of our controversy. And never till this morning have I been able to procure a sight of it; and that only from a copy lent me.

I had pleased myself with the hope, from the long suspension of your hostilities, that the mildness with

which I have treated your unprovoked displeasure, had had the desired effect in cooling down the flame of such unreasonable resentment, and that the effervescence of a mind so angry, would have boiled over no more. But it should seem that the relentless persecution of a man who hath never injured you, is, in the modern acceptation of Mr. Polwhele's divinity, the truest interpretation of 'doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.'

Be this as it may, however, every renewed instance of your attention to me, of what sort soever it may be, (and certainly it must be always of that sort which is most congenial to your character to bestow,) demands an early acknowledgment. I should be wanting in duty to myself, and still more to the higher claim the honourable cause I am engaged to defend hath upon me, were I to suffer a moment's loss of time in making a suitable reply to it. Indeed a dispute with Mr. Polwhele on any subject which hath the remotest connection with theology, can require no time for deliberation.

Your conduct in making your appeal to the bishop of Exeter, by way of calling in his lordship's authority to your aid, carries with it an exact uniformity to the malice which you have all along manifested in the controversy, and only speaks out a little more plainly what was your original design. So that when you tell the public that this is your last effort, it is only in other words saying, 'I have now aimed the most deadly blow I can.' Naturalists inform us, that the serpent never emits his poison so copiously as in his dying pangs. *Nunquam nisi moriens producitur in longum.*

You will forgive me, I hope, when I say that the title-page of this *third* letter of your's made me smile. For it brought to my recollection the circumstance which I charged you with in my answer to your *first* letter. You may remember I then told you, that in the manner of your furious attack upon me, wholly un-

provoked and unlooked for as it was on my part, and without the least notice given on your's, you had acted with the cowardice of the school-boy, who sculks from behind to give the first blow. You laboured hard at that time to evade the charge. But in the part you have now adopted, you have taken the most effectual method to confirm it. For I appeal to any man who hath looked on during the whole of our battle, whether in this appeal of your's to the bishop, you have not followed up the same dastardly spirit? For while reeking as you are under the smart of that chastisement which your temerity and presumption have justly brought upon you, (and which you too plainly manifest to the public, from the soreness with which you write,) like the school-boy well beaten, you now declare off to fight no more, and have run away to the master with the tale.

In the execution of this pitiful business of your's, as an *informer*, it is curious enough to observe how undesignedly you have over-acted your part.

Your object was to say the *sweetest* things of the bishop of Exeter, and the *bitterest* things of the vicar of Charles. But in the attempt, though approaching his lordship with such sugary words, as to a stomach of any delicacy is always disgusting, and to one more especially of his lordship's taste, must, I think, have produced nausea; yet in your eagerness to lead me with high crimes and misdemeanours, you were not aware what an indirect reproach you were thereby binging on his lordship's government. For on the supposition that I am really guilty of the irregularities with which you charge me, what doth this imply but that the bishop must be very inattentive to what is going on in the church, when it becomes necessary for the vicar of a little obscure village like that of Manaccan, to come forward to inform his lordship of the proceedings in a parish of such magnitude and importance as that of

Charles; situated as it is in the very centre of his diocese, and by far the most populous part of it.

But in this, as in many other instances during this controversy, the fury of your resentment hath deprived you of the power of recollection, and hurried you into the greatest extravagancies.

But, Sir, you should be told that my zeal in the best of causes, was not reserved for the bishop's knowledge from *your* information. It is a point with which his lordship hath been long acquainted. And in a letter which I had the honour to receive from him on the subject, prior to the first opening of this correspondence of your's with me, he was pleased to observe, that he was persuaded I was too well grounded in the principles which animated me in the discharge of my duty, not to be prepared to exert them through evil report as well as good report. And this, among other civil things which his lordship at that time thought proper to say to me, was not in consequence of any servile adulation shewn by me towards his lordship, but the free and spontaneous result of his own mind. I knew too well the deference due to the bishop's rank not to be ready to give him suitable respect upon all occasions. But while I kept in view his dignity, I never lost sight of my own. Conscious that I had done nothing to offend, I felt equally conscious that I had nothing to fear. And as to the prospect of preferment, I am confident that the bishop, if ever he condescends to speak of the subject, will do me the justice to acknowledge, that from the very commencement of our correspondence, I disclaimed all views of this kind. I begged his lordship to understand, though in the most modest and least offensive manner I was able, (what to a man of Mr. Polwhele's complexion, must be marvellous indeed,) that he had nothing to bestow in the way of preferment which I could accept. In the vicarage of Charles I had attained to the highest dignity I coveted in the present

life. Yet, if in the discharge of the duties of my ministry I had committed a breach of the law, I should readily submit to whatever punishment that law prescribed.

And the same, Sir, I now tell you. I can have no conception that a life like mine, spent in the unremitting prosecution of the duties of my profession, can subject me to the just reproof of any man. I can form no possible idea that a total abstraction from the world, to attend to the more immediate calls of my ministry, can constitute a breach of any one law, or that I lay myself open thereby to the censure of any one court of judicature. It forms to my view indeed a new dictionary in language, which the dulness of my apprehension prevents me from understanding, that it is become a crime to fill up the intermediate hours which the public demands of my church do not occupy, to the promotion of the same important purposes by *private* visitations among the people. I confess indeed, that in all this there is evidently a very strong *nonconformity* to the conduct of writers of religious jest books; and to men who subscribe to doctrines which they have the unblushing confidence to tell the world they do not believe. But I am yet to learn, if it be so, that the English legislation hath an express statute against such a nonconformity as mine.

But, Sir, it is possible I may mistake, for we live in an age of paradoxes. And I consider it to be no disgrace to my understanding to confess that my province is not to interpret the law, but to preach the gospel. And therefore, if there be a law existing which I have violated, let that law first be proved, and then let it take its course. No man alive, I will be proud to say, shall outdo me in the most *cheerful* submission to all its just decisions. And no man alive shall be more forward to contend against all unjust incroachments of it. I make a nice, though but a proper distinction,

between what is law, and what is opinion. Between (for instance) what is right, and what is Mr. Polwhele's ideas of what is right. I enter my warmest protest against all decisions of *private* opinion in a point of such magnitude as what interests the rights of a British subject. And you may believe me sincere when I add, that I am too tenacious of those rights, from a proper appreciation of their value, to surrender them unheard or untried, into the hands of any man. Like one of old, therefore, I say, and upon the self-same occasion as he did, 'if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death or of bonds, I refuse not to die.' But if on examination before my jurors it shall be found that my conduct is unimpeachable, I am too well apprized of the purity of my cause, and the upright administration of justice in the English constitution, to fear the utmost malice of a Mr. Polwhele.

Leaving this point, however, as a question which belongs neither to your province or mine to decide, I would gladly advert to any other subject in this *third* letter of your's by way of answer to it, if there were in reality any subject to answer. But unless I follow you through many pages up to the very neck in abuse, you have literally left me no other to go upon. From the investigation of the main point, the orthodoxy of my religious principles, which was made the original pretence for your attacking my character, you have uniformly shrunk, and in its stead substituted nothing but personal invective.

Through this part of your letter I must be excused from following you. For as I told you before, 'all the rage and fury of the correspondence shall be your's. I should blush if any gentleman found occasion to reprove me for a single term in my letters to you of falsehood and illiberality.' And had you attended to what I said to you in my last reply, you might have spared yourself the trouble of compiling abuse from the writings of

any other pamphleteer, by way of adding to your own. I have never to this hour read a single line, nor ever shall of such productions, either in your compilation, or in the original. And I venture to believe, that with all sensible minds, the reason which I have assigned in the 77th page of my second letter to you, hath proved sufficiently satisfactory. It is impossible, in the present state of things, to prevent those foul and untutored birds of the air, which sometimes hover over our heads, from letting fall the slime of their filthiness upon us. But it is beneath the dignity of the man to notice such occurrences.

I fear I shall again, however unintentionally, offend you in the bulk and price of this address. You were pleased to reprobate my *first* letter because its contents were folded within a *three-penny pamphlet.* Whereas this, for want of subject, must be necessarily compressed within a smaller compass. And if my printer charges more than *two-pence* for it he will much offend me. But as you have afforded me no opportunity to amplify my pages by the fair discussion of any point of theology, I have no alternative. For I cannot, I confess, imitate *your* method of annexing a sermon to the end of it, which is totally irrelevant to the subject of our controversy, by way of *making a book.* Such may be among the 'several reasons for which you have printed it;' but they neither of them come within my notions of what is right for imitation.

As from what you have intimated in this third letter of your's, that it is the last favour of the kind with which you intend to honour me, I am to consider that you now decline the combat, and of consequence therefore my correspondence with you also must end.

But before I take a final leave of you, suffer me to remind you, that however our personal dispute may be over, the award of the past yet remains to be given. Do not forget, Sir, that there is an higher tribunal than

the one which you have thought proper to bring the matter before, from whence the ultimate determination of our controversy must issue; and from whose decision there lies no appeal. The hour is approaching, and perhaps to either of us not very far remote, when we shall both "stand before the judgment seat of Christ." At this tribunal every iota of our contest will be reheard. Both *my conduct* in the ministry (which you have thought proper to make the subject of ridicule) and the *real motives of your's*, (by which you have been influenced to the condemnation of it) will be brought forward to view, and scrutinized with a precision which will leave no room in the one to evade, or in the other to excuse.

While in the prospect of this awful day of God, I take shame to myself (as well I may) in the consciousness of the numerous deficiencies, neglects, imperfections, &c. which mark my very best services; and desire to lay low in the dust before God, under a deep sense of the sin and unworthiness which runs through all; my mind feels no apprehension in the prospect of the solemn events of that day from the whole of the charges which you have brought against me. My fears, believe me, do not arise from the *enthusiasm* with which *you* think I am actuated; but from the *coldness* with which I am but too conscious I labour. Not for that my services have been marked with *itinerancy*, but that I have not sought out as I ought "the sheep of Christ, which are scattered abroad." And although a thorough conviction of unprofitableness on my part as it respects my ministry towards God, makes me anxious to renounce all ideas of merit in my final acceptance, and to rely wholly on the complete salvation which is in Christ Jesus: yet in my conduct, as it concerns the other departments in the world, that I have no cause to be "ashamed when I speak with my enemies in the gate."

And be not offended, Sir, while taking a final leave

of you, if I presume to make a parting request, that *you* will be as diligent to look into the motives of *your* conduct in this transaction as I have in *mine*. There is in every man's life a vacuity which the world can neither fill nor satisfy. In one of these retired hours sit down, Sir, I beseech you, and coolly consider the secret inducements and intentions for which you came forth to reprove me. Make the whole of this most extraordinary conduct of your's to pass in strict review before you. And in the anticipation of the great day of God which is to follow, judge fairly and dispassionately of what may be the final upshot of the whole.

Do not imagine, however, that I make this request from any personal consideration as it respects *my* feelings, but as it concerns *your own*. If you knew how little inconvenience I have felt during the whole of this quarrel; or how trifling the interruptions arising from it hath been to a life like mine, (which I think it but gratitude to the Almighty Giver to say, is of equal happiness and cheerfulness to any man alive,) you would be convinced that it is wholly on *your* account, and not on *mine*, that I thus solicit your serious retrospect to the past.

The attack you have made upon *my* character is among the smallest of your offences in the present affair. It is of little consequence to me *now*; and will be still less and less *every hour*, whether Dr. H. be considered a crowd-catcher, an itinerant, or fanatic.

Your indiscriminate abuse of the *methodists* is a much more serious object for your consideration. Amidst so numerous a body of people as they are, and so generally harmless as they are esteemed; it is astonishing to conceive through what inverted and discoloured mediums you must have looked to have beheld them so horribly.

But both these circumstances of offence are trifling when compared to the conduct you have manifested respecting the great doctrines of the gospel. The

imagination cannot, in my esteem, contemplate an object more truly distressing than that of a clergyman denying or disbelieving the whole operation of the Spirit of God in his church, while obliged constantly to implore those aids in every ministration.

Were I disposed to recriminate—what a volume for materials is afforded me in the *anecdotes you* have published; and the *observations another writer* hath since published upon them. But, Sir, your situation is such as disarms all resentment. In the very moment the hand is lifted up to chastise, the recollection of your present state and future prospect makes it nerveless.

The sincere wish of my heart is, that "God who alone can command the light to shine out of darkness, may shine in your heart;" and graciously give you "to see the things which make for your everlasting peace, before they are for ever hid from your eyes."

I am,

REV. SIR, &c.

ROBERT HAWKER.

TWO LETTERS

TO THE

REV. JOHN STEVENS,

Minister of York Street Chapel, London,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE HUMAN SOUL OF CHRIST.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

GRACE and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord!

Many thanks to you for your letter, on the subject of 'the Pre-existence of the Human Soul of Christ.' And as many thanks more for the many good things which are contained in it. The exceptionable parts of it, do not prevent me from very cheerfully presenting to you these acknowledgments; and I beseech you to accept them with the same sincerity as they are offered.

In making answer to your favour, I venture to assure myself, that you will allow me equal freedom to that which you have assumed, and which, indeed, the solemn subject of our correspondence demands. Our object is truth; yea, God's truth, and not man's opinion. And most readily will I give you credit, from the contents of your letter, (though I have no knowledge of your person) that you are equally earnest with myself, for the establishment of the truth, and that truth only as it is in Jesus. Under these impressions I write. And while I pray God the Holy Ghost to guide *me;* I beseech the same Almighty Teacher to be with *you.* May it please the Lord, that both may be directed by his unerring wisdom, and enjoy that sweet covenant promise; "I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit; which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go," Isa. xlviii. 17.

And here, in the opening of this correspondence, on my part, it behoves me to soften, if possible, the asperity of your displeasure, from the unfavourable impressions you received in the perusal of my lecture on the Person, Godhead, and ministry of the Holy Ghost. And I cannot but hope, that you will not consider the terms I used in that lecture so harsh, when I tell you, that they were wholly directed against the Sabellian heresy. For at the time when I published that lecture, I had never heard of any one which espoused the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence in an human soul, but the followers of Sabellius, the Lybian. And as this long exploded, but now revived error of the Sabellian carries in its pestilential bosom some of the most deadly poison to the vitals of the true faith; denying a trinity of persons in the Godhead, and excluding the Holy Spirit from being a party in the covenant of grace; in my view of one tenet belonging to the sect, I included the whole; and, as such, deemed it what I still consider it to be, an awful heresy. And, as far as relates to Sabellianism, I see no cause to retract a single expression; and more especially, when it be further considered, that it is not the *persons* led away with these errors, but the *errors themselves*, against which I wage war. I am still indeed at a loss to explain, how a doctrine, which forms so prominent a feature in the creed of the Sabellian, should be found among any of those who hold "the faith once delivered unto the saints." You yourself will, I presume, be ready to acknowledge, that nothing short of a divine authority can be sufficient to give it credence with the church. And how this is to be proved, I am further at a loss to know; for such as profess Sabellianism hesitate not to say, that they learnt it not from God the Holy Ghost, for they deny his Person, Godhead, and ministry.

Having made this apology for myself, I will beg to observe, that there needeth one from you. You have

drawn up a creed for me to which I cannot subscribe. You have said, my faith is, 'that the Son of God, as a divine person, was eternally begotten of the substance of the Father.' Sir, I have never presumed to look into, much less enter, the hallowed ground of mystery, in relation to the *modus existendi* of the divine persons in the Godhead. I have no conception of the nature of that relationship which subsists between the Father and the Son. I read of it continually in the scriptures, and I most cordially accept it, as it is proposed for the object of my faith. But as the word of God, though plainly declaring it, hath not explained it, so neither do I.

I know, indeed, that some of our greatest divines have dwelt largely on the subject of what they call 'eternal generation;' and the phrase hath been, and still is, very commonly used. But I have never seen it defined by any writer to my satisfaction. Dr. Gill, in his day, strongly contended that the term is correct when applied to the Sonship of Christ. And in the memoirs of this great man (for a great man he certainly was) prefixed to his exposition on the bible, his biographer hath observed, that the Doctor was of opinion, 'a trinity of persons in God cannot be defended, but on the ground of the proper Sonship or filiation of Christ.'

For my part, I have always contemplated the subject, since I knew any thing of the Lord, at an infinite distance, and with the most profound humbleness of mind. And though few in the school of Christ have manifested greater dulness, or made slower advances in the attainment of divine knowledge; yet, through grace, I have a long time been able, in relation to the subject of mysteries, to make the holy scriptures the only standard of my faith. Hence, I do most firmly believe, that Jehovah, while existing in a manner peculiarly his own, namely, in a trinity of persons, is in essence but one and the same. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are

all equal in glory, and in all eternal properties which distinguish the Godhead. And although, in reference to the covenant of grace, as it concerns the church, Jehovah hath been pleased, and is pleased, to make himself known to his people in distinct acts of love from each person in the Godhead; some of which (according to our weak apprehension of things) appear greater, some less; yet in the glory of the Godhead, and in all divine perfections and attributes, there is the most perfect equality. One in nature, being, essence, sovereignty, will, purpose, pleasure.

You have added a second article to the creed which you have drawn up for me, which I equally disavow; namely, when you observe, that I say, 'in some sense Christ died for the sins of all mankind.' I am unconscious that an error so palpable hath fallen from my tongue or pen for many a year. Indeed, Sir, I should blush if there were a man alive who cherisheth with greater warmth of affection in his heart the glorious truths, which are the fundamental doctrines of our most holy faith; namely, the everlasting, electing love of God the Father; the special, personal love, both in marriage union, and redemption-grace of God the Son; and the equal favour and affection in regenerating, distinguishing mercy of God the Holy Ghost!

I am sorry also to observe, in the midst of this creed, which you have compiled for me, I know not from whence gathered or for what designed, that you have made an attack upon the establishment of the church of England. Dear Sir, what hath the establishment to do with the subject in question? If I understand right, you and I are engaged in one single point of inquiry; namely, whether Christ had, or had not, a pre-existent human soul, prior to his incarnation? Let it be supposed, if you wish it, that the established religion of this land is full of errors; and that Dr. Hawker, in belonging to it, is enveloped in them; yet, what have

these things to do with the point in question? They ought not to be taken into the account, since they neither make for or against the main thing at issue.

True, dear Sir, I do belong to the church of England. For indeed, and in truth, amidst many things in her liturgy and discipline which would admit of much improvement, the soundness of her faith, in her articles and homilies is such, as without giving offence to any order of orthodox professors whatever, I may venture to say, is exceeded by none. And were I disposed to leave the establishment, because mingled with sound doctrine, there are errors in it which I lament, but cannot remove; I should be much at a loss to know what class of dissenters to join, where nothing of equal incorrectness is discoverable.

Bear with me while I say, (for I mean no offence in saying it) I know of no community, or order, among my dissenting brethren, with whom I could meet in church communion, which would afford me an asylum for greater spiritual privileges than I now enjoy. I know indeed many, yea, very many of the *excellent of the earth,* who are members of meetings, with whom I now live in true christian and brotherly love; and with whom I shall one day eternally dwell, and be for ever united to them in our glorious head, when communion upon earth is over; but there are causes for which we cannot now always join in the same form of worship. I believe, dear Sir, that you, as well as numbers of those holy men of God, lament in secret with me, the sad, sad departures from the faith, which hath taken place in too many of the churches of the saints, since the days of their fathers. I often think, if it were possible for the faithful dissenters of our orthodox brethren, which lived a century since, to look up from their graves, and visit those places of worship which they once occupied, where the great and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel were unceasingly proclaimed, and

where their souls were warmed and refreshed with them from one Lord's day to another; what would they say at the sad change? Neither do I conceive their minds would be less affected, had they the consciousness of knowing what is going on in the present day, in beholding many public meetings of what is called the religious world; where one great leading character marks the several different denominations assembled, which is to conceal their particular tenets, that no little party spirit, as it is called, may interrupt the general design; but every other consideration be swallowed up in the name of christian philanthropy. I thank God, "I have not so learned Christ!" Neither do I think that my correspondent, Mr. Stevens, with all his partiality for the dissenters, would recommend me to leave the establishment, while such things are in my view!

Moreover, if I do not greatly err, the Lord hath blessed me, and my poor labours, where I now am. I was born in the establishment; and new born in it; and have witnessed the new birth of others in it also. Until therefore, that I see 'the pillar of the cloud' going out before me, I should not think myself justified in departing. Every servant of the Lord, ordained by the Lord to his ministry, is like a centinel on his post. And it is death by the military law for a soldier to leave his station, before that he who planted the watch comes to relieve him. I need not tell you, who it is that 'fixeth the bounds of his people's habitations!'

But it hath been said, (and probably you may have heard it) that I am wedded to the establishment by the love of gain: and but for the "loaves and fishes," I should have left it long ago. I am in a great measure a stranger to you. Nevertheless, an old man as I am, and lately brought back from the border of the grave, and now every day hastening fast towards it again, may be credited when I say, that had the love of

money preponderated with me, many a year since I might have quitted the church of England on very advantageous terms of worldly profit. Neither on this ground hath the temptation been small. For although I am a man of little expence, yet never in any one year, since I entered the ministry, hath the income of my labours been competent to cover the maintenance of my household; and but for other resources I must have been poor indeed. Pardon, dear Sir, this garrulity, induced as it hath been from your observations on the church of England, in my belonging to it!

Had I been at your elbow when you were framing my creed, I should have put you in mind of a church to which I hope, notwithstanding our differences in other points, you and I both belong; and without we do belong to it indeed, it is of no consequence what other congregation we are the members of, whether churchman or dissenter. Yes, dear Sir, the church to which I allude is the church of Christ, which the glorious head of it himself saith is one, and but one, "the only one of her mother; the choice one of her that bare her."

And the sure and certain proof of belonging to this church is, when "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; being justified by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus iii. 5—7.) This is the standard of character, whether in the establishment or out of it. This is the door of entrance to every member. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) And wheresoever this regenerated child of God is, there the church is in every individual member of Christ's mystical body: where this is not, the church is not, be the ordinances in themselves ever so well formed or constituted. Infant baptism, or adult baptism, are alike unprofitable with-

out the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I venture to conclude, Mr. Stevens will join issue with me here!

I was sorry to note an error in your title-page. I have before observed, that the single point of contention (and that I hope a friendly one) between you and me is, whether Christ had, or had not, a pre-existent human soul. But whosoever reads the title-page of your letter, would at once conclude that Dr. Hawker denies the pre-existence of Christ: than which, nothing can be more foreign to the truth. I would fain persuade myself that this mistake of your's could not be intentional. And, therefore, I please myself with the assurance, that if any future editions are called for of your letter, you will do me the justice to correct it.

I am not authorized to suppose that my humble writings, numerous as they are, have fallen in your way. But had it so happened that you had seen any of them, in which I have treated of this subject, and especially my 'Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible,' you would have perceived, that none of the modern writers, (as far as my abilities have reached) hath gone further than I have done, in exalting the glorious person of the Son of God, as God-man Mediator in his pre-existent state.

According to my apprehension of this sublime subject, next to the glory of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, which of necessity is the first and supreme end of all things; the great object for which Jehovah went forth in acts of creation, and for communion with his creatures, was for the express purpose of aggrandizing, and giving personal glory to his dear Son. God was pleased that the Son of his love should be visible in human nature. God was pleased to behold him as such! It "pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." It pleased the whole trinity of persons; for such is that scripture, (Coloss. i. 19.) "In

him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (or personally) Coloss. ii. 9. Hence the Son of God, is the visible Jehovah; as that text of scripture proves; "no man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) So that the Person of the Son of God in human nature, before a single act was wrought by Christ, as God-man Mediator, stood in Jehovah's view, as the first of all objects of his complacency and delight. He beheld him, as "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;" in whom all grace and glory are met, and centre, and shine forth in one full constellation. And hence Jehovah's proclamation of him to the church; "behold mine elect! in whom my soul delighteth!" Hence in his first bringing him into the world, he saith, "and let all the angels of God worship him!" And we have authority from the word of God to conclude, that the first and ultimate acceptation of the church here in grace, and hereafter in glory, is wholly *in* Christ. For it is said, to be "to the praise of the glory of his grace, that we are accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) and there can be no doubt, but that when the church is brought home to glory, and is become perfectly holy and perfectly happy, without blame before God for ever in love; yet even then, when millions of ages shall have passed away, the church of Christ will be more acceptable and pleasant in Jehovah's view from being beheld and accepted by him in Christ's person, than all the benefits derived from Christ's labours. Such are the glories of his person as set up from everlasting, God-man Mediator!

These things in relation to the personal glory of Christ, in his pre-existent state, set up as God-man Mediator from everlasting, are scattered more or less over all my writings; and in a more especial manner in my 'Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible.' The

observations I have particularly made on this subject, on the 8th chapter of the Proverbs in the old testament, and on the first chapter of the epistle to the Colossians in the new, I would refer to in proof. And as the former was written not less than seven years since, and the latter not less than four, it will be manifest from both what my views then were, as well as in the present moment, in relation to the personal glory of Christ, in his pre-existent state, as Head and Husband of his church.

But, dear Sir, I need not observe, that there is a mighty difference between the person of Christ, considered in his being set up from everlasting, as he stood in the view of Jehovah, the Head and Husband of his church; and, according to your system, his then having a pre-existent human soul. The former is clearly revealed in scripture. The latter hath, in my apprehension, not one scripture in confirmation plainly and clearly revealed to rest upon. Arguments and reasonings taken from the judgments and opinions of men are too inconclusive and unsatisfactory in a point of such vast consequence. And as you and I are both anxious to come at the real truth on this momentous concern, you will pardon me when I say, that not a single line have you advanced in your letter to make me a convert to the doctrine. I had rather have one sentence in the scriptures from God the Holy Ghost, with a "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts," in confirmation of any of his blessed truths, than all the reasonings and opinions of the world.

I will beg permission to state to you my views upon the subject, and the causes of objection which I have to this doctrine. I have read your observations in favour of it with all due attention; and most readily and cheerfully do I bear testimony, that you have shewn great ability, and gone as far, I think, as any man can go, in endeavouring to establish an hypothesis which

hath (according to my apprehension) no scriptural foundation. And when I have brought before you my objections to the belief of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, prior to his incarnation, I shall persuade myself, that with whomsoever the truth is, there will be no further cause for displeasure, having explained the circumstance, which, unintentionally on my part, first excited it. And hope, looking, "guide us into all truth, and glorify the Lord Jesus in taking of the things of Jesus, and shewing unto us."

And *first.* The one great, and to me I confess, invincible objection to the belief of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, is the silence of the Holy Ghost upon the subject. A doctrine so important, and so intimately connected with the welfare of the church, if true, might have been expected to have been found in every part of scripture. That the Son of God should have an human soul four thousand years at least, (to say nothing of the eternity before,) prior to his having an human body; and yet, that the Almighty author of inspiration should pass it by unnoticed, is marvellous indeed! If on the presumption that Christ's possessing an human soul from before the foundation of the world, had been with a view to his glory, would not the Holy Ghost in this case, (whose office in the covenant of redemption it is to glorify Jesus, by taking of the things of Jesus, and shewing to his people,) have delighted in bringing the whole church acquainted with it? And if on the presumption that this possession of an human soul by Christ, before all time, had been with an eye to the church's comfort, would not the Holy Ghost have acted in his gracious character as Comforter, in communicating the glad tidings to the people? But instead of any revelation on the subject, we find a total silence, and the church is left to her own conjectures, wherefore her Lord and husband so many ages before his assumption of an human body, should possess an human soul;

and how at a period so remote from each other, the junction between the soul and body should take place at his incarnation? Surely nothing short of the testimony of God the Holy Ghost ought to be considered sufficient to establish the belief of such a doctrine in the church. And this one view alone, if there were no other, would, I confess, be with me an invincible objection to the admission of such a tenet into my creed.

But, *secondly.* I am the more confirmed in the rejection of this doctrine, from beholding the very different method God the Holy Ghost hath observed respecting his making known the incarnation of Christ. We find the Lord the Spirit watching over the church with a tenderness peculiarly his own, and from the first dawn of revelation to the coming of Christ, unceasingly engaged in preparing the church for that great event, God manifest in the flesh. Let any reader of the bible, whose eyes are spiritually open, attend to the records of holy scripture concerning this auspicious æra of the Son of God tabernacling among us. Let him begin the subject where God the Holy Ghost hath begun it, from the days of Adam; and prosecute the glorious history as it is carried on, like a golden thread in the word of God, from one age to another, until he comes to Bethlehem, where Christ was born; and he will behold with what a world of apparatus the momentous doctrine is introduced; and the church taught every generation more and more, to expect her coming Lord. The Holy Ghost seems to be anxious, (if the expression be warrantable,) that the church shall be led on step by step towards the glorious period of Christ's incarnation, and is therefore gradually opening to her view more enlarged descriptions of his person in his two-fold nature, to render her knowledge of him and her desire after him, increasingly precious as the light of the morning, "which shineth more and more unto a perfect day."

Thus God the Holy Ghost opens the subject of the

incarnation immediately on the fall; and the first revelation of this miraculous work, begins with directing the church to expect Christ as "the seed of the woman," (Gen. iii. 15.) When the day of Abraham arrived, the Holy Ghost enlargeth the view of the interesting subject to the church, (and now declares the nation from whence Christ after the flesh should come.) "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (Gen. xxii. 18.) Progressively going on in keeping the church awake to the blessed expectation,—the patriarch Jacob is influenced by the Holy Ghost in his dying hours, to proclaim Christ in his household; and he points to the very tribe in Israel, out of whom the Shiloh should appear, Gen. xlix. 10. And when David in after generations arose, the family was marked from whose loins the Redeemer should proceed, 2 Sam. vii. 12. Still more as the period drew nearer, the Holy Ghost stirred up the minds of his servants the prophets, to declare somewhat more or less, pointing to this great event. Isaiah was influenced under a spirit of prophecy to tell the church that Emanuel, God with us, should be born of a virgin, Isaiah vii. 14. The prophet Micah pointed to the place; and Daniel to the time of the Redeemer's advent, Micah v. 2; Dan. ix. 24. Thus did God the Holy Ghost gradually unfold the gracious mystery; and never remitted his information to the church until the Lord came. By his unceasing instruction, the Lord's people were kept alive from one age to another in the expectation of him whose name, by the same divine teaching among his people, was uniformly spoken of as "He that should come," (Matt. xi. 3.) And to the very moment of Christ's incarnation, we are told that the Holy Ghost filled the minds of the Lord's chosen with the expectation of it, in the instances of John the Baptist, Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, and no doubt many others who were "waitin for the consolation of Israel," (Luke ii. 25—36.)

These truths are in every one's knowledge who is acquainted with the word of God. Allow me then to ask, is it possible to suppose that God the Holy Ghost should be thus earnest to prepare the church from one generation to another, in looking for the coming of Christ in an human body; and yet be everlastingly silent through all his scriptures concerning his human soul? On the presumption that Christ in his pre-existent state had an human soul, would not God the Spirit have spoken of it, yea, and dwelt upon it as a subject of great importance for the church to know? Nay more than this, supposing the doctrine true of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ before all worlds, and which soul was to be united to the human body of Christ at his incarnation,—would the Holy Ghost have dwelt so much as he hath done in relation to this mysterious union of God and man, when the fulness of time came to be born of a woman; and yet never once in the account taught the church, that the Son of God had an human soul in his pre-existent state, which was then to be brought into union with the body when miraculously born of the virgin? These things are, in my view, insuperable difficulties to the reception of the doctrine of Christ having an human soul in his pre-existent state. And here, as in the former statement of objection, the silence of God the Holy Ghost on the subject, is with me an invincible obstacle to its belief.

Thirdly. The difficulty of belief receives another addition from the want of analogy between the supposed production of this human soul of Christ in a pre-existent state; and that of the human body of Christ at his incarnation. There is not an article of our holy faith more strongly marked in the scriptures of eternal truth, than that one which most plainly, fully, and clearly shew the whole three persons of the Godhead to have been equally concerned, and equally engaged in the mysterious work of God incarnate. The Son of

God by the spirit of prophecy, ages before his incarnation, ascribed the preparation of his human body to God the Father. Compare Psalm xl. 6, &c.; Heb. x. 5, &c.; Psalm cxxxix. 13—16. But that God the Holy Ghost was equally an Almighty Agent in this stupendous formation, the overshadowing of the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost is declared to have been the cause of her conception; and wherefore that holy thing which was born of her, should be called "the Son of God," (Luke i. 35.) And the act itself of the assumption of our nature into union with the Godhead, is as strongly declared to be the work of the Son of God. "For verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. Now the inference from this statement, (which let it be remembered is wholly scriptural,) is plainly this: If the whole three persons of the Godhead alike engaged in the production of the body of Christ, is it not reasonable to conclude there would be the same concurrence in the production of the soul? But if the human soul of Christ in his pre-existent state be produced as the act of the Father only; and as you state, (page 30,) 'who is therefore called his only begotten Son, and his first born; and yet he did not beget his divine personality, but his human nature only,'—where is the analogy between the production of Christ's human soul and his body in the agency of that production? Had the Son of God himself no hand in the assumption of this human soul in the pre-existent state, when it is so expressly said he had in the assumption of our nature at his incarnation? And was God the Holy Ghost no agent in the production of this human soul before all worlds, who is so blessedly shewn to have wrought his part in the production of Christ's human nature in the fulness of time. Here is a point of no small difficulty to be removed before that I can subscribe to the doctrine of Christ having an human soul in his pre-existent

state. And though I will most readily and cheerfully give credit to the orthodoxy of my correspondent, Mr. Stevens' faith in a trinity of persons in the Godhead; yet I would without offence venture to hint that the belief of God the Father's sole agency in the production of the human soul of Christ, savours a little of Sabellianism, which allows but of one person in the Godhead.

Fourthly. Though I lay the whole stress of my incredulity to your system of Christ's human soul in his pre-existent state to the silence of God the Holy Ghost upon the subject, and never can be proselyted until taught it by the blessed Spirit himself; yet were I disposed to follow up what I have advanced on this ground by other arguments, I venture to think that there are not a few collateral circumstances which serve to explain the evident cause of the Holy Ghost's silence, on a doctrine which hath no foundation but in human opinion.

You have conceived, it appears by your letter, that in the human generation, nothing is derived from father to son but body: and if I understand right what you have advanced upon this subject, you make this an argument for giving some degree of sanction to the doctrine in hand. But that I may not by any misapprehension pervert your meaning, I will beg to repeat your own words on this occasion:—page 29, 30. 'An animal, (you say,) generates its own kind; but who does not see that man stands higher in the scale of beings by reason of his not generating entirely his own kind; and because he has an immortal nature or spirit immediately from God, which borrows nothing of its being from material things.' And by way of confirmation to this statement, a sentence or two after you add, 'and as Abraham begat Isaac, his only begotten son, who was therefore called his son; and yet Abraham begat Isaac's body only, so the eternal Father begat his beloved Son

Jesus Christ, who is therefore called his only begotten Son, and his first born, and yet he did not beget his divine personality, but his human nature only.' 'This Sir,' you add, 'is my manner of conceiving of this important subject; and it is hoped, it is not a daring heresy that I thus commend to your patient and serious consideration.'

In answer, I beg you to take no further offence when I say, though it be *your* manner of conceiving of this important subject, it is not *mine*: neither do I believe you can derive any sanction for it from scripture. In relation to the term, "only begotten Son," and the like, in reference to the Godhead, I have in the former part of this letter observed, that a subject necessarily involved in such mystery, I presume not to explain. But if considered in relation to the mediatorial offices of Christ, I venture to accept the phrase, as including the whole of our Lord's engagements in our nature.

Your views of man's standing higher in the scale of being than brutes, and that by reason of his not generating entirely his own kind, is assuming a thing which you have not supported by any authority. And the instance you give in the history of Abraham in begetting Isaac, that he begat his body *only*, I think you would find no small difficulty to prove. The word of God appears to intimate more. The Holy Ghost, speaking of the two Adams as the heads of their respective seed, saith, "The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit," 1 Cor. xv. 45. Who can take upon him to say, what is, and what is not, communicated by those respective heads to their respective seeds? In respect to Christ here called the last Adam, in his being said to be "a quickening spirit," we cannot but know, that this is not said in allusion to the quickening himself, but of his seed, John v. 21. And as this is said of Christ, by way

of explaining what was said before of the first Adam, his being a living soul; it should seem to say, that he is not considered as a single person, but as a public head; and so formed to convey that nature to others, which he had personally in himself. What that nature is, and of its full extent and meaning, I have no apprehension, much less to explain.

But on the ground you take, that every man hath an immortal nature, or spirit, immediately from God, which borrows nothing of its being from material things; it will follow by an undeniable consequence, that if we have our spirits immediately from God, and borrow nothing of that being from material things, neither can we then borrow, or derive any thing of their corruptions; and then original sin in our spiritual part is done away. Somehow or other, therefore, this statement of your's cannot be correct. If God, in the instance of every human being created, gives an immortal nature or spirit immediately from himself, and we derive nothing from our parents but a mere body; polluted and sinful as that body is, because generated from such a stock; yet our immortal part coming from God, must be holy. The question is, how comes it tainted with original sin? The scripture, which in consequence of original, as well as actual transgression, declares every son and daughter of Adam to be dead in trespasses and sins, considers the soul in this state of spiritual death (for it is not the *body* that is here spoken of,) and hence the necessity of the new birth. I cannot therefore discover any one advantage in point of argument to be derived from this statement, much less any parity of reason in reference to Christ's pre-existent human soul.

Fifthly. Your ideas, that this pre-existent human soul you speak of (given to Christ, or begotten of the Father; for you do not say a word of the Son of God assuming it himself,) renders Christ a real, and not an

imaginary Son. That I may not pervert your words, neither misconstrue your meaning, I will beg to transcribe them, page 29. 'The soul of man,' you say, 'becoming united to a begotten nature, is denominated, and acts accordingly; so the divine person, being self-existent, and unbegotten in the divine nature, becoming united to the begotten human nature, is denominated, and acts accordingly. This is the Son of God existing, and not an ideal or imaginary Son.'

Dear Sir, is it possible that you can mean by such expressions to say, that the Son of God was only an ideal or imaginary Son until the Father had begotten for him an human soul! Do you indeed carry your notions of this pre-existence of the human soul of Christ to such an extravagant height? Was the Godhead of the Son incapable of entering into covenant engagements with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and to act in his mediatorial character as the chosen head of all election without this previous union with an human soul? Was it then an ideal, or imaginary counsel we read of in scripture, when Jehovah spake "in vision to his Holy One?" Ps. lxxxix. 19. And upon the presumption that things are so, can you shew cause wherefore so important a point, in the economy of grace, should not have been revealed, but the Holy Ghost be altogether silent upon it? Is it not among subjects of mystery the most mysterious, that the Father should have begotten an human soul for union with the Son *four thousand years* at least, before his open incarnation; and the Holy Ghost left the discovery of it to the wisdom of man? Yea, that the belief of it now should rest only on human testimony?

I must beg to enter my protest against such opinions. And in proof that the Son of God, had he not been formed with an human soul in his pre-existent state, would neither have been ideal or imaginary; I desire to call to your remembrance what the Holy Ghost hath

recorded in scripture concerning Abraham, when the Lord first called him as the head and representative of his spiritual seed.

We read in Genesis xvii. 1—5. that the Lord promised to make Abram a father of many nations. And the Lord in speaking of this grant, speaks of it as of a thing already done. The words are (ver. 5.) "for a father of many nations have I made thee." And the Holy Ghost in after ages, when explaining this subject by his servant Paul, puts the words in the *past tense;* "I *have* made thee." And the Lord the Spirit then shews how. "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were," Rom. iv. 17. Now let it be remembered, that at the time the Lord so promised the patriarch there was not a single one of the seed born: yet the Lord speaks of it as already done: "I *have* made thee a father," &c. meaning as plain as words can speak, that before him, or in God's view, to whose infinite and comprehensive mind, past, present, and future, form but one object, the things promised subsisted in Abram as if done; and he stood before the Lord, not an ideal or imaginary father, but the real head and representative of the whole seed. And the Holy Ghost, as if to remove all difficulties in our apprehension of this great event, adds, "God who quickeneth the dead, calleth those things which be not, as though they were." Quickening the dead, or calling into being what before had no being, but in the divine mind, being the same thing in point of operation with God. If then in the instance of Abram such things were said, when as yet he had no child, but only chosen of the Lord, as the elect head and representative of all that was to follow; shall it be thought incredible that the Son of God, to whom Abram was but a type, should personate his church, when standing up before

all worlds as their glorious head and husband, when as yet he had made no open manifestation of himself in his office character of Mediator? If God the Father who quickeneth the dead, calleth those "things which be not, as though they were," shall not God the Son, "who quickeneth whom he will," be supposed competent to act in this headship of Mediator to his church, and not be considered ideal or imaginary, though until the fulness of the time he neither assumes himself, nor hath begotten for him by the Father and the Holy Ghost, either an human soul or body.

Before men decide upon subjects of so mysterious a nature, and are guided in framing their opinions, more by reason than revelation; it would be well to pause and inquire, what saith the Holy Ghost upon these momentous things? If it be considered ideal or imaginary, that the Son of God should stand up from everlasting as the elect head of his church without either an human soul or body; what reality shall we be able to annex to those precious things spoken of the church, and which are said to be given of the Lord to the church from everlasting. To instance one among many. The apostle, speaking of the Lord's mercy to the church, saith: "Who hath saved us, and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. How, or in what manner is this said to be done? The members of Christ's mystical body had no actual existence when these blessings are said to have been given them. And yet somehow or other there must have been in the divine mind, both the knowledge of their persons, and an ordination of grace the Lord in his purposes determined for them, or such things could not have been said. Had the promise ran in different terms, of grace given to Christ for us; then the thing would have been otherwise. But the words are, given

to us in Christ Jesus. Most evident therefore it is, that the church had a being in Christ; yea, and a well-being in Christ, according to God's purpose and decree, before any of the church had actual existence in the world, or before the world began. And if the *members* of Christ's body needed no actual existence to render the grace given them before the world began to be sure, but as they stood in the purpose and decree of God; what necessity could there be for the glorious *Head* to have an human soul in a pre-existent state, and without which to have been ideal, or imaginary? How much more agreeable to the whole analogy of scripture is it to believe, that in the covenant transactions of the holy persons in the Godhead before all worlds, the Son of God personated, what afterwards he would fully be at his incarnation: and when the fulness of the time was come, he tabernacled openly in substance of our flesh, being as it behoved him to be, both in soul and body, made like to his brethren: and in the union of God and man, wrought out deliverance for his church and people, "having obtained eternal redemption for us!"

I have far exceeded the limits I meant to have observed in this letter, and therefore shall not enlarge. But I might add, that I have other objections, besides those I have stated, against the reception of the doctrine you appear to have so warmly embraced, of the pre-existent human soul of Christ.

I know not how it strikes you, but with me I confess, that instead of those sweet constraining affections to draw to Christ, which the precious doctrine of God incarnate taking into union my whole nature, awakens through grace in my soul; I should feel a distance and shyness in the contemplation of the human soul of Christ without a body as existing before all worlds. Neither can I make out any relationship between this part of Christ's human nature and ours, to give the

confidence of drawing nigh to him. Indeed, as the scripture informs me, that he was to be made "in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God;" as long as I considered his human soul as not so made, I could not reconcile it to myself that, under my soul travail and soul exercises, he could enter into my feelings by his own! But as long as I look to Jesus, as God the Holy Ghost instructs me to look to him, as taking into union with the Godhead a nature both of soul and body, made of the same materials as my own, yet without sin; I feel a boldness to go to him at all times, and upon all occasions, as one that not only *knows* as God, but *feels* as man; and can, and will, grant the suited "grace to help in all time of need."

Moreover. Under the idea of Christ's human soul being begotten before all time, and not coming to us as his body; I cannot see the possibility of his answering the character all along in the scriptures spoken of him, as being "made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law." In my apprehension of the truths of God, it forms a distinguishing point, that he which buys out the mortgaged inheritance of his brethren, and performs the part of the Redeemer, must have the right of redemption belonging to him. He must be next of kin. Now as long as I have formed my creed upon what the Holy Ghost in his scriptures teacheth me, and have traced the gracious, but mysterious pedigree of the Lord Jesus Christ after the flesh, as "the seed of the woman," and both in soul and body becoming our Kinsman-Redeemer, the nearest and dearest of all relations; I have felt, and do feel, and enjoy the blessedness of it. I behold the fulness, and completeness, and suitableness, and all-sufficiency of his sacrifice; and I behold no less, at the same time, his right of redemption from the relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed. But I shall never be able to divest my mind from the apprehension that the

offering of a pre-existent human soul, doth not answer to scripture testimony on this ground. And until God the Holy Ghost makes it known, mere human reasoning and argument lose all effect with me.

Add to these, I should feel distressed in the idea of Christ having a pre-existent human soul, when I have all along been taught of God the Holy Ghost to take comfort in that scripture, which, beginning with one of the sweet names of Christ—" verily"—tells the church how the Son of God manifested his love to his people, in taking their nature in preference to that of angels. " For, verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." But, dear Sir, forgive me if I say, the beauty and glory of this scripture is lost, if the Son of God, in choosing to take upon him " the seed of Abraham," took only a body without a soul, as you tell us, Abraham begat Isaac's body only. Neither can I discover the needs be of this information to the church, that the Son of God took not on him the nature of angels, on the presumption that the Holy Ghost knew the church was already apprized of the human soul the Son of God before had in his pre-existent state. And all that follows of the necessity of being made like to his brethren in all things, that he might be both merciful and faithful, is lessened in its effect, when this nature of Christ, according to your creed, is made up of an human soul begotten before the world, and an human body born in time. How far an union of nature so remotely formed, and so differently produced, could be suited to the feeling of our infirmities, remains with you to shew. I feel a blessedness in the assurance, that as he was made in all things " like unto his brethren;" so was he in all points " tempted like as we are;" and the conviction of this gives a confidence to conclude, that as " he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted."

And now, dear Sir, I shall bid you farewell! I know

not whether it may please you to write to me again or not. But if the former, I beseech you to let the whole body of evidences you send on the subject of our different opinions, be all taken from divine and not human authority. One decision of God the Holy Ghost, is of more weight with me, than ten thousand arguments taken from among men. A point of such vast moment can derive nothing by way of conviction from "the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but from what the Holy Ghost teacheth." And very sure I am, my correspondent, as well as myself, is equally desirous that the faith of both should not stand "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

And on the presumption of my hearing from you again on this subject, I shall beg of you moreover, to give me scriptural proofs, for the removing of all my fears, that this doctrine you wish to be received, of 'the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ,' doth not favour too much the Sabellian heresy, of the admitting only of one person in the Godhead. In the manner which you say you conceive of the Father's begetting this human soul for the Son, nothing is said of the agency of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost in this divine act; whereas, it is a grand doctrine of the true faith of the gospel, that the formation of the human nature of Christ, engaged the joint agency of all the Holy Three Persons in the Godhead. That the body of Christ (according to your creed) without a soul, should call forth the united operations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that the soul of Christ, formed before all time, should be the personal act only of the Father, requires scripture proofs to confirm. But that (according to my creed) both soul and body, being in the fulness of time the joint operation of the whole persons of the Godhead, which scripture declares, and which is consistent with the whole analogy of faith; this is agreeable to all the other truths of the gospel, and is blessedly confirmed by the Holy Ghost.

Ere long, the subject which has thus engaged your pen and mine, will cease to be the subject of any further dispute, and engage both no more. At my advanced time of life, I cannot be far remote from that blessed period, when I shall see the Lord Jesus "face to face, and know even as I am known." And you, dear Sir, though I know not either your person or your age, cannot be far behind to the same enjoyment. May the great Head of his church and people, in the mean time, grant to both, while exercising our feeble services here below, the suited grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

I very sincerely and affectionately "commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

Your's, dear Sir,

In the Lord Jesus,

ROBERT HAWKER.

LETTER II.

Plymouth, September, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

I GREET you in the name of the Lord.

Your second letter, bearing date the 4th of July last, did not reach me until the 15th of September. It is now the 17th: let this explain my seeming inattention, and be accepted as the true cause, in the want of an earlier answer.

I regret the trouble which you have taken in this last letter of your's. And the more so as I conceive my reverend correspondent could not but have seen, from the contents of my former letter, that on a subject of such vast moment, as hath called forth our friendly controversy, all human reasonings, unsupported by divine authority, lose their influence with me.

I had said, as I thought, in that letter, every thing becoming in me to say, both to do away your anger, and to convince you of my creed. And as I then assured you, that the adoption of your system of faith on this point, (which gives a pre-existence of an human soul to Christ, four thousand years and upwards, to say no more of it, before his true and proper incarnation) can find no acceptance with me, in any thing short of the testimony of God the Holy Ghost, (which I well know is not to be found in scripture) I concluded that our correspondence was at an end.

Under this impression, I had taken, and did take a farewell of you in that letter, with all the affection of a brother, and fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ. And that I now write again, is not to renew the correspondence on this subject, but solely to prevent any misconstruction which otherwise might be made of my silence. I have no ambition to proselyte you to my opinion. And you will allow me, with all becoming modesty to say, that nothing which you have advanced will reconcile me to your's. Our different sentiments on the subject of our correspondence are both before the church; and there let them remain. And having acknowledged the receipt of your second favour, and said thus much in reply to it, I should add no more, unless to exculpate myself from one or two charges which you have brought against me, in some observations of your's, and in which you have misconstrued mine.

Had I known, indeed, your intention of sending me

a second letter, I should have made it a subject of request, that in it my reverend brother would have rather shewn the *cui bono* of his hypothesis, than gone over any further ground of contention. And since he wishes me to believe, what (according to my view) is not taught in scripture, he would kindly have pointed to some of the beneficial effects (if there are any) arising from his doctrine. But here my friend is altogether silent. And I confess that I feel this omission the more sensibly, because that with me the *cui malo* of the thing itself is incalculable. For to say no more of it, on the supposition that Christ had an human soul before the world, the many blessed consequences resulting from the incarnation, in "the seed of the woman," and the "all things," in which it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, are, in my view, done away. (Gen. iii. 15. Heb. ii. 17.)

You are pleased to say, that in requiring an express testimony from God the Holy Ghost, to the belief of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, I require more on this matter than in almost any other. Indeed, dear Sir, the tenet is so novel with me, while the object of it is so greatly important, that it doth require more. It is a subject of the first magnitude; it involves in its consequences matters of eternal concern. And I speak with all possible reverence when I say, that according to the general tenor of divine revelation, when the Lord is about to proclaim somewhat more particularly impressive, we find the word introduced in terms more than usually striking; so here, such a momentous article for faith to receive, it might have been expected by the church, that the Holy Ghost would have prefaced the promulgation of it with a "thus saith the Lord."

And while you seem to intimate, as if these expectations were unreasonable, and without cause, I very humbly beg you to consider, before that I give an im-

plicit credence to the doctrine, what it is that I am called upon to believe, and what are some of the many consequences involved in that belief.

By this faith I am taught to believe that the Son of God took into union with himself, in his divine nature, an human soul without a body, before the world, and an human body, without a soul, in time: many ages and generations passing in the interval of these distinct acts; holy scripture all the while neither relating such things, or explaining the causes of them.

Moreover, by this assumption of an human soul without a body, before the world, for the purpose of the office of Mediator; such a mediator is not the mediator which the word of God reveals; for there we are told, "that there is one Mediator between God and man: the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) But this mediator is not God and man; but God and partly man, and so continued, according to this supposition, all the intermediate space prior to his incarnation. The imperfection of the human nature, of necessity rendered the person of the mediator incomplete also: for a soul without a body doth not constitute manhood. And, therefore, on the presumption that the Son of God before all worlds, took into union an human soul only for the purpose of mediation: what kind of mediator God and part of man constitutes, I know not; but certainly an imperfection of being must imply an imperfection for office, and, consequently, this is not the one Mediator between God and man the scripture reveals—"the man Christ Jesus."

Pardon me, my reverend brother, when I say it doth require the express testimony of God the Holy Ghost, to receive and digest such a doctrine. And however sceptical to your apprehension I may appear, I must be permitted yet further to say, that whatever others may profess on this point, nothing less than God the Spirit's testimony will ever proselyte me to your opi-

nion. And I cannot help thinking that I am warranted to this firmness of conclusion from the word of God. For if, as it is there written, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost:" it should seem to be a very statement, from such authority, no less to conclude, that no man can say, that Jesus had an human soul, prior to his incarnation, unless taught it by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. xii. 3.)

And I pray your candour to bear with me yet further, while I add, that the more I ponder the subject, the more tenacious I am of this judgment. For according to my apprehension of things, all that sweet and endearing relationship which the church hath, with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is derived from his incarnation. I cannot by all that you have said, no, nor by all the arguments and reasonings of all the men upon earth, discover any affinity the church hath, in a single instance, of any one member with the human soul of Christ, supposing that human soul to have been created before the world. And could you, or any man alive, have brought proof from scripture of the Holy Ghost's testimony to such a faith; humbly to the earth as I must then have fallen before God under the revelation; yet, in the moment of profound reverence to the decree, my soul would have mourned in the deepest sorrow at the doctrine. Constrained to relinquish what I have so long cherished with a warmth of inexpressible affection in my heart, that by the incarnation in the seed of the woman, I am related to the Lord Jesus Christ, both in body and soul; I should then say —this relationship is over. An human soul begotten before the world can have no connection in nature with the church born in the world: and what a train of distressing consequences, if things be so, would such a doctrine introduce into the circumstances of mankind.

Hence, dear Sir, as this matter stands between us, your views and mine on this point are as distant as the

extremities of the northern and southern poles, and as impossible ever to meet together. But while we thus differ in one point, I rejoice in the recollection of those many glorious truths where we cordially correspond in all; and I desire to bless God for the unspeakable mercy, in which we mutually agree "to the truth as it is in Jesus!"

In the further exculpation of myself from these minor charges you have brought against me, I would pray to be heard in relation to what you have said, as if some of your friends had learnt the doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ for me. Your account of the deacon of your congregation on this score, is indeed most singular. It forms an anomaly in history, and staggers credibility. That a man should become the teacher of a doctrine which he never learnt himself, and what is yet more marvellous, which he himself had never once heard of, at the time when he is supposed to have taught it! Dear Sir, I am almost at a loss to know what to say to your friend; but this I think, without offence, you may tell him for me, that as I have never yet learnt the doctrine myself, and all the knowledge he professeth of it is from human teaching, like myself, I hope he will not sit down satisfied until he hath truly learnt it from the teaching that is divine. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." (Isa. liv. 13.)

Similar observations I would propose in my further defence to the charge brought against my writings in the 'Poor Man's Commentary,' on a passage in the book of the Judges. It would have been well, and savoured of candour, had your friend, in referring to this portion, taken in the whole context before that he drew his conclusions. All I said on that beautiful verse of the Lord's being grieved in soul for the miseries of Israel, was said in a way of inquiry, and expressly in allusion to the whole human nature of Jesus. And I

quoted by way of confirmation those memorable words in Isaiah—that in all the afflictions of Israel the Lord was afflicted. (Isa. lxiii. 9, 10.) But would my reverend correspondent from hence draw an inference so very foreign to the intentions of the writer, that such expressions savoured of the doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ! Doth he do so in relation to other parts of scripture? When it is said, that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears open to their prayers," and the like; is it supposed by any reader that it is simply the eye or the ear, and not the whole person intended? When one of the prophets, speaking of Christ's sacrifice, saith, "thou shalt make his *soul* an offering for sin;" Isa. liii. 10. and when one of the apostles, in allusion to the same doctrine, called it "the offering of the *body* of Jesus Christ once for all," Heb. x. 10. did the one mean only the *soul*, and the other only the *body?* Were it not to hold a lighted taper to the sun at noon-day, to suppose it necessary the observation, that both meant one and the same thing, namely, the whole person of Christ? And if the same construction had been put upon my writing on the phrases and words adopted, as holy scripture is pleased to adopt on a like occasion, I persuade myself no one conclusion could have been fairly drawn of my favouring an opinion which, as I before remarked, I had not at the time of writing my 'Poor Man's Commentary,' nor for several years after the smallest apprehension of; no, neither even heard of "by the hearing of the ear."

But I forbear to trespass further.—Dear Sir, farewell. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you. Amen."

Your's, in the Lord Jesus,

ROBERT HAWKER.

THE

TRUE GOSPEL;

NO YEA AND NAY GOSPEL:

WITH THE APPENDIX,

IN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET LATELY PUBLISHED BY AN ANONYMOUS WRITER,

UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF VERAX.

THE TRUE GOSPEL.

And what is the yea and nay gospel?—Truly it is much easier to say what it is not, than to tell what it is. For a yea and nay gospel is, in fact, no gospel at all. It is everlastingly made up of may be's and if be's. It is altogether conditional, and therefore must of necessity leave the whole in the final event to a peradventure. It doth not rest upon God's will, but upon man's pleasure. It is not founded in divine appointment, but in the result of human attainment. Not in what God's grace is, but in what man's merit shall be. And of consequence, according to this state of things, the whole is left at the last to an uncertainty which shall prevail, God's power or man's; the Lord's counsel or man's works. A precious sample this of a yea and nay gospel.

Moreover, all the principles of a yea and nay gospel, are in correspondence with those outlines of the system. A yea and nay gospel takes for granted, that all men are alike in a salvable state; neither can any man fail of salvation, but from his neglect of the opportunity at one time or other afforded him. And if a man seeks for acceptance before God, partly by faith and partly by good works, he is certain of happiness. Christ is made by the yea and nay gospel, nothing more than a procuring cause. So that if a man so far makes use of Christ as by him to seek out his own salvation in the exercises of faith, and repentance, and good works; he doth all that is required of him, and Christ will make up the

deficiency. The improvement of this opportunity with such men, is the sure way of salvation; and by the neglect of it, a man according to their creed may be lost. In those ups and downs, those hopes and fears, the principles of a yea and nay gospel consist. And thus living at an uncertainty, such men die at an uncertainty; and they go out of the world as they came into it, at a peradventure, concerning the one thing needful.

And the advocates of a yea and nay gospel, all act in perfect conformity to those principles. The preachers of it are continually holding forth a motley religion which they call the gospel, made up of law and gospel, faith and good works. Were it not for the awfulness of the subject, a man might smile to hear what very wooing and winning words are made use of by them to gain upon the hearts of their hearers by human persuasion. Offers of Christ, yea pressing Christ upon the congregation, are the chief topics adopted. And sometimes, from the great earnestness with which they have worked up their natural feeling to persuade, they enforce the present opportunity as if, should it be neglected, never another perhaps may be afforded them. And not unfrequently they call into aid that blessed scripture of the Holy Ghost which the apostle Paul hath given the church in a very different sense from what those men use it. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation I have succoured thee. Behold now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation,"* (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

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* Every one who is acquainted with the bible ought to know that those words in the former part of the verse, are taken from the writings of the prophet Isaiah xlix. 8. where the prophet under the Holy Ghost, is representing God the Father speaking to God the Son, in covenant promises, to help him on and carry him through in his mediatorial character, in the accomplishment of redemption. See also a further account of this, Psalm lxxxix. 19—37. What the Holy Ghost hath added in this scripture by Paul, is an affectionate application

Reader! let you and I before we prosecute the subject further, pause for a moment and contemplate the awful features of the yea and nay gospel. Sure it hath not in it a single look that is lovely. How truly opposite to what the apostle hath elsewhere proclaimed, concerning the freeness and fulness, and the everlasting assurance of salvation in Christ—"this is a faithful saying," said Paul, (and well might he say so, being himself a living monument at the time, both of the freedom and greatness of it,) "and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," (1 Tim. i. 15.) And worthy indeed it is of all acceptation, for all need it; when it be received as it is held forth, the free and unmerited gift of God in Christ. But if it be joined with the conditions of a yea and nay; that it may be a salvation as my poor soul improves it, or a condemnation if my faith, and prayers, and tears do not come up to such and such a standard; while any thing depends upon me and my attainments, it ceaseth to be a matter of joy and glad

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of the blessed doctrine of Christ's redemption being now finished; that the church may know that what was then predicted by the prophet, hath been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore the present time-state of the church is the accepted time, and the day of salvation for gathering in the Lord's people. The now, both of the accepted time and the day of salvation, means the whole day of life, in the instance of every child of God. And that, and that only, strictly and properly speaking, becomes so when the Lord makes his people "willing in the day of his power," (Psalm cx. 3.) And so far is this from being limited as the yea and nay men would have it, that if refused to-day, may not be offered to-morrow, that it never can be said to begin in effect, until grace begins as the cause in the heart. The labourers of the eleventh hour, were never sent before. The dying thief on the cross, was never called by sovereign grace until dying. And till God calls all the wooings and winnings of human entreaty will leave the sinner just were it found him. It is God alone who can persuade Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem. Gen. x. 27. And whenever the Lord manifests this sovereign act of his grace, be the day of life what it may, this is, in the truest sense of the apostle's words, the accepted time, and the day of salvation. How very awful must it be then in man to limit the Holy One of Israel! How solemn a delusion, to make a yea and nay gospel, in leaving things at a peradventure, which the Lord hath not made so. Oh, the blessedness of all those "promises in Christ Jesus, which are all yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us," (2 Cor. i.)

tidings to my heart; for very sure I am, I should come short of it. And "if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," (Gal. ii. 21.) Reader! it is our mercy, that the yea and nay gospel was not the creed of the apostles. Paul was so offended at the very mention of it, that he speaks of it with abhorrence; nay, he almost swears to it, that such was not the gospel which he and his faithful companions preached to the church. "But as God is true, (saith Paul,) our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea; for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us," (2 Cor. i. 18—20.)

But if the yea and nay gospel be not the true gospel, it is time to inquire what is? And here again it is our mercy that we cannot be at a loss, under divine teaching, to discover "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and as the Lord Jesus himself hath said concerning all his people, "if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," (John viii. 31, 32.)

The true gospel comes home endeared and recommended to the affections of the Lord's people, both in the beautiful simplicity of it, and in the fulness of it; agreeably to what the prophet was commanded by the Holy Ghost to proclaim in the mountain of the Lord's house, that it was a way so plain and self-evident, when taught by the Lord, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, should not err therein," (Isaiah xxxv. 8.) In the covenant engagements of Jehovah, each glorious person of the Godhead is set forth as taking his own personal acts in the accomplishment of it; and Christ becomes revealed as the one, and the only one ordinance of heaven, for salvation to every one that believeth.

God the Father's love is very blessedly manifested in

all those acts of grace which refer to his choosing the church in Christ; adopting the church in Christ; and accepting the church in Christ before all time. And God the Son's love is equally revealed, as having from eternity betrothed the church to himself in an everlasting union; and in redeeming the church from all iniquity, by the sacrifice of himself. And God the Holy Ghost's love is demonstrated with equal clearness in the scriptures of truth, in having anointed both Christ and his church from the beginning; and by his regenerating grace during the time-state of the church, raised her up together with Christ, and made her sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And all the sovereign acts, so very fully and completely secure the present state of the church in grace, and for the future enjoyment in glory, that nothing of peradventure can arise: no yea and nay can come between to make the event doubtful. The charter of heaven runs in these words: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," (Jer. xxxii. 40.)

The true gospel being thus founded in the eternal counsel, purpose, will, and pleasure of God, in his trinity of persons, comes home endeared to the heart by every thing that can recommend it to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And when the Lord Jesus Christ is held up to the view as containing in himself, and in his offices and relations, every principle essential to salvation, here are no peradventures, no buts, or ifs, or doubts, or misgivings. The sinner, if taught of God, is led to see that salvation is in no other but in Christ; "neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Christ is declared to be the sum and substance of the whole bible. He is the object of all ordinances; the thing signified in all sacrifices; the end of the law for righ-

teousness to every one that believeth. And when the Lord the Holy Ghost, who lifts up Christ to the church in all the fulness and completeness of his finished salvation, brings him home to the heart also by the blessed influences of his sovereign grace, and forms him there the hope of glory; then Christ is seen, and felt, and enjoyed, in all the sweetness and suitableness of his divine character; and the believing soul enters into the apprehension, how blessedly he is made of God to all his people, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 30.

When we contrast the true gospel of Christ, as preached by the apostles in the scriptures of eternal truth, to the yea and nay gospel of human inventions, it is not to be wondered at, that we find the great apostle Paul speaking with such vehemency of zeal against all departures from the unerring standard. Hence, in his epistle to the church at Galatia, he expresseth himself in these strong words. "If we, (said Paul) or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." Not that the apostle in the least supposed the bare possibility of the thing itself, that an angel from heaven could ever do so. For very sure Paul was, that if angels came down again to preach Christ, they would preach him as they once before did at his birth, the complete Saviour of lost sinners. But Paul merely takes up the supposeable idea of angels preaching contrary to his preaching, in order to demonstrate that if it were possible for angels to do so, they would be accursed. And he repeats it a second time, in order to shew that what he said, was not the effect of haste in speaking, but under the full conviction of what he had learnt from the Holy Ghost. See Gal. i. 6—12.

Reader! what are your views of this subject? How

have you learned Christ? If he who taught Paul had taught you, (and Paul declares that the gospel which he preached, he neither received it of man, neither was taught it by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ) surely you cannot look on, in the present day, but with great concern, when every where around we behold a yea and nay gospel, so very generally substituted in the place of the full, free, and finished salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where shall we go, to what congregation of what are called evangelical churches shall we join ourselves, to hear the person, work, offices, characters, and relations, of the Lord Jesus Christ held up as the *Alpha* and *Omega*, in God's view, and his people's view, of the salvation of his people? Alas! what self-seeking, and self-pleasing; human attainments, and creature righteousness, men are taught to be looking after, instead of seeking to Christ, in order to recommend themselves to God. And what may we finally expect, nationally considered, will be the consequence, but as it was by Israel of old? Ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they rejected the Lord of life and glory. The pharisees of those times were not chargeable for immoralities; for they prided themselves in those attainments. They did not neglect the ordinances of God's house, for they were strict to an excess in all *outward* observances. But they slighted him by whom alone salvation could be obtained. And what national judgments followed? And very certain it is that the condemning sin of every people is thinking light of him whom Jehovah delighteth to honour. Oh! what a tremendous judgment is contained in that one sentence: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish!" Isa. lx. 12.

One word more with the reader at parting. Have you seen the wretchedness of a yea and nay gospel?

And do you discover, through divine teaching, that the true gospel can be no yea and nay gospel? Then let me just add an affectionate recommendation, to seek under the Holy Ghost's teaching, that blessed life of grace, whereby faith derives from Jesus daily strength to live upon Jesus; and to make him what God hath made him, the author and finisher; the first cause and final end of every thing that is truly blessed, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity.

Depend upon it, that it is a blessed and most prosperous way, to maintain and keep alive in the soul the gracious influences we derive from the Lord, by living upon the Lord. Direct acts of faith upon the person of Christ, cannot fail of endearing Christ. Every child of God, when brought into an acquaintance with the plague of his own heart, is supposed to be under the teaching of God; yea, in fact, must be taught of God the Holy Ghost. And it is one of the unalterable promises of the covenant; "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children," Isa. liv. 13. But how is this fulfilled if the children are living at an uncertainty of a yea and nay gospel? What peace can they have, as long as they are apprehensive that there is unpardoned guilt upon the conscience? What confidence can they enjoy towards God, while they make justification before God a variable thing; and instead of coming wholly to the Lord, in the new and living way of Christ's blood, are making part saviours of their own frames, and feelings, and experiences?

It will be a mercy if any reader of this little tract, whom the Lord hath called by grace, with an holy calling, (and it is for the use of such, under the Lord's blessing, for whom it is written,) should be led to see the wretchedness of a yea and nay gospel, with which the present day so much abounds; and be directed by the Holy Ghost, in his glorifying the Lord Jesus, to live

upon a sure gospel, by living wholly upon Jesus. To such a one I would say, very sure I am, your soul will find no real, solid, and substantial comfort, until you are brought to live upon Christ, by living out of yourself. As you came first to Christ, or rather, more properly speaking, as you was led first to Christ, so to the last you will find nothing more to bring you to him.

Empty you first came, and empty in yourself you will always be. And it is a blessed way for maintaining real spiritual life in the soul, when we barter our sins for Christ's righteousness; our poverty for his riches; our leanness for his fulness: and in so doing we find the truth brought home to the conscience, with which Christ comforted Paul; "My grace (said Jesus) is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And what it was to Paul, so is it to all like Paul, the children of God in Christ. 2 Cor. xii. 9.

And now in conclusion. If the reader be happily taught of the Lord the evil of sin, in his own fallen, degraded nature; and the infinite suitability in Christ's salvation for his recovery by grace; then will the true gospel appear to him no yea and nay gospel; but both the person of Christ, and the salvation by Christ, be in his esteem what it is in God's esteem, the *one thing needful;* and Christ "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth!"

And these will be the happy and blessed effects of such divine teaching. *First,* the soul will be kept humble before God, in a conscious sense of indwelling, inherent sin, in the very nature and being of man. Our constitution by the fall, is virtually all sin. The essence, the very elixir of our being is rotten in the core. "I know (said Paul) that in me, (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. Hence that precious effect which the Lord marked out by the prophet: "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy

shame when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done saith the Lord God!" Ezek. xvi. 63.

Secondly. As the consciousness of this inherency of sin, tends, under the sovereignty of grace, to keep the soul humble before God; so doth it effectually tend also to hide all pharisaical pride from the eyes of the sinner. The apostle Paul was himself a lively example to illustrate this great truth. Before his conversion, he had the highest apprehension of his own innate goodness! and thought himself within a few steps of heaven, when he lay bordering on the brink of hell. Built up on this pharisaical righteousness, he formed the highest opinion of himself. "I was alive (said he) without the law once;" that is, I was so self-confident of my own attainments, that I had not the smallest apprehension but of finding favour for myself before God. "But (said Paul) when the commandment came;" that is, came home with all its mighty bearings in its spiritual force, and power, to my heart; shewing me as in a glass, my own sinfulness, and deformity, then "sin revived, and I died," Rom. vii. 9. The soul, under such views of self, will never be able to cherish any thing of pharisaical righteousness before God.

And *thirdly;* another blessed property will be the sure consequence; namely, the keeping open, through grace, a spring of true repentance always before God. The Lord himself describes such holy mourners, by his servant the prophet. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born," Jer. xxxi. 9.

And lasty, and above all; nothing can, or will, as fully tend to endear Christ, in all the glories of his person; and in all the greatness, fulness, necessity, and suitableness of his salvation; as the daily sense of our own nothingness, and hopeless and helpless state as

we are in ourselves before God. Oh! the preciousness of our most glorious Christ, when the daily sense of the sinner's daily want of him is inwrought, and inlaid in the soul. Blessed for ever be God! Such is the true gospel, and no yea and nay gospel of our most glorious Lord. The Lord confirm it in the hearts, and minds, and consciences, of his people; and that "all the promises of God in Christ Jesus, are yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us!"

APPENDIX.

A few days since, I received through the medium of the post office, a small pamphlet, with this title, 'The True Gospel, by Dr. Hawker, shewn to be at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles; and therefore undeserving of its assumed appellation. In a letter to a friend, by Verax.'

This pamphlet was accompanied with a written letter, (whether from the same author I know not (for it was alike anonymous) expressed in terms of no small acrimony. It began thus:—'The morose and cencorious spirit (censorious perhaps meant) which prevails in your 'True Gospel,' affords me a strong and presumptive argument, that those sentiments which inspire such a spirit are not of God.' What the writer meant by 'sentiments inspiring a spirit,' I am at a loss to know. That the spirit of a man may beget sentiments, is easy enough to be understood, for the word of God saith, and blessedly saith, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity;" and of consequence inspire all corresponding affections. But how this order of things is to be inverted, by sentiments inspiring a spirit is, I

confess, above my comprehension. However, the object of the writer was to say somewhat very severe; the manner of wording it was no fault of his, if his abilities could not keep pace with his anger. At the close of the pamphlet, were the following words, written apparently with the same pen as the letter, which I transcribe as before, *verbatim et literatim.* 'Take heed, Sir, that you be not found in the same work with him, whom the Holy Ghost stiles the accuser of the brethren, Rev. xii. 10.'

The whole contents of the pamphlet, abstracted from the many angry expressions scattered up and down in it, may be summed up in a few lines; and indeed is summed up in the author's own words, in one of the paragraphs: he saith, that the true gospel of my tract, 'implies that there is some other inability than that of the will, which prevents man from being saved;' but saith he, 'Jesus and his apostles knew of no other; they therefore taught that in the rejection of the appointed salvation, men are inexcusable and self-condemned.' Here is free will in the very quintessence of it. A doctrine, if true, which sets aside the necessity of the new birth altogether, and makes the grace of God to depend wholly upon the will of man.

Unmoved as I am with the least anger, beyond the hectic of the moment, from the contents either of the pamphlet or letter, (for indeed both are too weak and trifling, in point of argument or sound reasoning, to excite any) yet the duty which I owe the church of God, will not suffer me to remain silent under such aspersions. For if it could be shewn, according to the bold title-page of this anonymous writer, that the gospel which I have gone preaching among the people of God, for near forty years, is indeed at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles; it would be a mercy in the great head of the church, both to myself, and to his people, that I should preach no more. And

if there were even the possibility of being found in the same work with the devil, after the long and laborious services I have sustained in the ministry, I should have cause to be tremblingly alive with the bare apprehension.

But none of these things move me. I know whom I have believed. Neither for the justification of myself, or my preachings, or writings, should I have taken up the pen to advance a single line. That is a point which must be determined elsewhere. It is not from personal considerations that I now write. I consider myself imperatively called forth to confirm and make good what I have written, for the church's sake, which is Christ's body. It is his blessed cause for which I feel; his people's comfort for which I contend. For myself, let me be thrown into the back ground of the subject through the whole. It matters not what becomes of me, or of any man, so God be glorified. But it is of infinite moment to the present and everlasting welfare of the church to be established in "the truth as it is in Jesus." It is of eternal consequence that no child of God should be left to the peradventure and uncertainty of a yea and nay gospel!

It is on this account I am come forward, to add this appendix to the new edition of this little tract. And if my opponent will believe me, I am truly glad of the occasion. I consider it both a privilege and a pleasure to do so, for sure I am the word of God will bear me out, in full testimony, that the doctrines delivered by me, as well from the pulpit as the press, are in perfect harmony with the gospel of Christ and his apostles. And let not Verax be offended when I add, that I find cause to bless God for this providence. I can and do see the Lord's gracious appointment in it. And who shall say what effects of blessedness may not follow, in the spirit of inquiry it may occasion among the Lord's people, from the Lord's blessing upon it? We find the

great apostle Paul bursting forth in holy joy, when from certain opposition made to his ministry, he was afterwards enabled to tell the church, that "the things which had happened unto him had fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. Christ, (said that servant of God) is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice!" And why may not every humble follower of the Lord, upon similar exercises, hope the same? Verax himself surely will not refuse his amen to the apostle's words, if I venture to adopt them for my own. "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through the prayer of the church, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." (Philip. i. 12—19.)

I must first observe, at the opening of the subject, that unhappily for my reprover's cause, he hath stumbled at the very threshold of it. By a misnomer, peculiarly his own, he has called that my gospel which was never mine, nor his, nor any among the sons of men, being the "glorious gospel of the blessed God." (1 Tim i. 11.) I should have blushed, indeed, if either in the title-page, or in the body of the work, or in any other of my writings I had joined my name to that of the gospel. No! I have simply done *that*, which is the uniform custom of all preachers to do; namely, I have taken a text of scripture, as the title-page of my sermon or tract; and from thence, have formed my observations upon it. Whether those observations are correct or not, is irrelevant to the subject. The gospel is still the same. My judgment or the judgment of any other man upon it, can have no operation whatever to alter the word of God. The true gospel still remains the true gospel, and never can become a yea and nay gospel. So saith God the Holy Ghost by Paul. So saith the universal voice of the church of God in all ages. And so must say every man that takes God's word for the standard of his faith, however differently he himself may construe the sense of God's truth.

After detecting this misrepresentation of my reprover, concerning the subject, from the subject itself; the question at issue between Verax and Dr. Hawker, is reduced to a single point. He takes for the ground work of his argument, that my statement of the true gospel, as set forth in my tract, is at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles. I on the contrary contend, and with all the warmth and energy of one that contends for the plainest matter of fact, (though void of the least anger) that this little work of mine, as well as the general standard of all my preaching and writings, are in perfect harmony with the gospel of Christ and his apostles. And as the final termination of the dispute involves in it every thing that is momentous, both in relation to the life that now is, and that which is to come, (for the truth cannot be with both) may it be the pleasure of the Lord graciously to guide into all truth, and to confirm his word unto those that are his servants, "wherein he hath caused them to hope!"

And here in order to bring the matter to a speedy issue, by compressing as much as possible into a little compass, I shall lay down one general postulatum on the subject, which, when followed up with proof, will meet and answer all the flimsy observations of my reprover. I am charged by him, with being at variance with Christ and his apostles, in that I have asserted the true gospel is no yea and nay gospel. In my defence I assert that I am herein in perfect harmony both with Christ and his apostles, their preaching being wholly and altogether the same. And, moreover, I add yet further, that in their example, the preachers of the gospel find no authority whatever to make 'offers or invitations in an indiscriminate manner to sinners in general;' neither do 'the scriptures furnish a single instance,' where Christ and his apostles have ever made offers but to the people of God.

I purposely place the subject upon this full, clear, and broad bottom, that my opponent, and all free-will men like him, into whose hands those writings of mine may come, shall be compelled to acknowledge, that my statement hath nothing of ambiguity in it; but is at once fair, candid, and open. And I purposely do this, on another account also, namely, that when I shall have followed up my postulatum with proofs, unequivocal and decisive; and shall have brought the subject to an issue, it may for ever silence such bold, unwarrantable, and anti-scriptural assertions of free-will men altogether. And if I am successful in substantiating what I now assert, with testimonies wholly taken from scripture, (which under God's grace is one of the easiest tasks in the world to perform) it ought to be followed with conviction in every breast before whom it comes. Even my opponent himself, if he claims the character of a man of candour, should gladly throw down his weapons of controversy, and come over to the faith which he hath laboured to destroy.

I say he should. But I am not so sanguine as to expect it. Nay, on the contrary I am taught, and by an authority that cannot be mistaken, that such a change is never to be expected, no, not in a single instance, in any mind untaught of God. For Jesus himself hath said, and in a tone of decision which admits of no appeal, "no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." 'Yes,' saith my reprover, 'Jesus and his apostles knew of no other inability, to prevent men from being saved, than that of the will.' But the Lord as if "to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," repeats the solemn truth in the same chapter, and to those who heard these words before, and considered them as hard sayings. "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given him of my Father." (See John vi. 41—65.)

Now for my proofs. The first portrait of Christ on this subject, may be taken from the view of him which the evangelist hath drawn while preaching his first discourse, in the jewish synagogue. It may be called, indeed, his ordination sermon. Luke relates it with beautiful simplicity—chap. iv. 16—29. to which I refer for the sake of brevity. In this sermon Christ first preached generally before the multitude. In which he declares the authority of his mission: his qualifications to it, from the anointings of the Spirit; the office he came to sustain—of preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the broken-hearted, and the like; the several acts of grace he came to perform; and by the performance of which, his person and Messiahship was to be known; he then returned the book to the minister, and sat down—and while the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened upon him, "he began to say to them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Now let the reader observe on this preaching of Christ. Here is not a single word of invitation from Jesus to the congregation, from beginning to end: neither 'invitations nor offers.' Jesus simply states the outlines of his gospel, and no more. Surely had it been the intention of Christ, or had it corresponded to the purport of his ministry, to have held forth general promises *indiscriminately to all sinners*, there never could have been a finer opportunity for it. It was the sabbath day. A large congregation, no doubt, was assembled. But not a word in a way of *offer* or *invitation* through the whole, dropped from his sacred lips.

But it is not enough in support of my argument to shew this: this sermon of Christ's proves yet further, that it never was in the plan of Christ's preaching, to make 'general offers to sinners indiscriminately.' Let the reader attend to what follows in this discourse of Christ, and he will find what I say to be true. For we

are told, that while Jesus thus spoke in a *general way*, of simply shewing what the great features of his gospel were, the whole congregation were delighted, and "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Thus far all was well; for there was nothing while Jesus thus preached in a general way, for the free-willers and the pharisees of that age to take umbrage at. It fared then with this divine teacher, ("who spake as never man spake") as it fareth now with faithful preachers from among men: as long as the preaching is confined to general truths, no offence for the most part will be taken by the multitude. But with them, as with their master, if at any time from general truths they proceed to speak in a particular application of them, no free-will hearers will brook free-grace preaching. And thus it fared with Jesus himself on this very occasion. For as soon as Jesus began to make application from the general truths he had laid down, to special, personal, and discriminating cases, and instanced in those of Naaman and the widow of Zidon, but we are told that all the synagogue was full of wrath, and rose up, and thrust this divine preacher out of the city, and would have slain him.

Now let any candid man upon earth look at this striking instance, and determine the point. Yea, let my opponent himself be the umpire if he hath the candour to acknowledge it. Let him say, what was it wrought such an instant change in the minds of the congregation; but because, that instead as Verax saith, there is nothing wanting but the will to receive the word of God for salvation; they could not receive it, because as John the baptist bore testimony to this certain truth: "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." (John iii. 27.) While the Son of God preached general truths all was well: but when he added, that there was no healing in Israel in the days

of Elias but in the instance of Naaman and the widow, because the prophet was sent to no other ; here was the cause of displeasure. Oh! how plainly were the words of Jesus fulfilled upon this occasion, as was before quoted ; "therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father." (John vi. 65.)

Let us pass on and take another portrait of our Lord while preaching. Look at him during his sermon on the mount.—Here we are told was a great multitude also assembled : upon all which occasions, Jesus spake of general truths. And through this whole discourse there is not a single instance of 'one offer or one invitation :' and although it was a long discourse, which occupies three whole chapters in the relation ; yet is it wholly confined to the office of teaching ; see Matt. 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters. And what is said of this sermon, may be said, more or less, of every sermon of Christ, which he delivered in the audience of the people ; all are in a general way. For if at any time upon those occasions the Lord did make a special and particular application of his subject, it was always personal, or in reference to certain dispositions of the mind, which as he, who knows the heart, knew that those to whom he addressed himself possessed ; they were of those the Father hath given to him, and as he called them "his sheep which knew his voice." Many instances of this kind we have recorded by the evangelist, such as the case of Matthew, Zaccheus, and the like. But these are so far from affording authority to say that Christ made 'general offers and invitations indiscriminately to all,' that they prove most decidedly to the contrary, being wholly special and personal.

Advancing step by step in our pursuit of proofs to this statement of Christ's general way of preaching, we shall rise higher in the confirmation, as we go on, to behold another portrait of our blessed Lord in this

department of his ministry. Let us look at him when delivering his word in *parables.* Here, indeed, if my opponent, and all the free-willers of the age would accept of Christ's own decision upon the subject, they will find enough in one single verse to level to the ground at one blow, all the Babel-buildings of their hypothesis for ever. "Wherefore (said his disciples) speakest thou unto them in parables? Jesus answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given," Matt. xiii. 11. Can any thing be more pointed and decisive? Is it possible that any man in the face of this scripture can say, that Jesus and his apostles knew of no other inability but that of the *will,* which prevents a man from being saved?

But we must not stop here on the subject of parables. The Lord moreover adds, "Therefore speak I in parables, because, they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." Here Christ brings the matter to a final issue, and a very solemn one, if properly considered, to every free-willer it is. God the Holy Ghost in those words hath not left it to the light and presumptuous reasonings of men untaught of God to determine, whether the will of the creature be, or be not, sufficient of itself to believe unto salvation; for he here asserts, that the blindness of the mind is induced, in confirmation of the words of the Holy Ghost by the prophet. And so firm and unalterable are his decisions on this point, that no less than seven times those words of God by the prophet are quoted in the scripture in proof, Isa. vi. 9, 10. Matt. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 7, 8.

Surely if there were a possibility for the human mind,

void of divine teaching, to receive conviction of any one given truth of God, from the mere testimony of outward evidences, the doctrine of Christ's discriminating grace, taken, as it is, both from his holy word, and from his own personal example in his ministry, would carry the accumulated witness to every heart. It would act like an overwhelming torrent, sweeping before it all the whole mass of the flimsy objections thrown up as a barrier by pharisaical pride and ignorance. But a decision which cannot err, explains the cause of unbelief, and traceth it to its source; "Therefore, (saith Jesus,) they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart that they should not," John xii. 39. While these things, however, lose their effect on all persons untaught of God; and, from the cause the Holy Ghost himself assigns, must for ever lose their effect, unless the Lord becomes the teacher; what a distinguishing mercy it is to the Lord's people, that while the Lord speaks *now*, as he did *then* in the days of his flesh to the multitude, in parables, "when alone he expoundeth all things to his disciples," Mark iv. 34. Truly in effect the Lord doth as much speak to them now as he did of old, when after preaching in public he "turned himself unto his disciples, and said privately, blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear," Luke xxiii. Matt. xiii. 16.

The instances which I have now brought forward, as so many portraits taken of our Lord, in the exercise of his own personal ministry, are enough in point to prove the doctrine and establish the object I had in view. And if the reader be disposed to search for more, he may find them in every part of the gospel, carrying with them, as they certainly do, the same features of character in this department of Christ's office. While speaking to the multitude at large, our

Lord's preaching was invariably in *general* terms; and if, even upon any of those occasions, the Lord spake in a *special personal* manner to any of his people whom he saw among the throng, his address to them was accompanied with certain marks of character, by which his invitations to them should be known. As for example: in his general discourse we hear him saying, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger," &c. John vi. 35. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness," &c. John viii. 12. But when to those or the like general expressions, the Lord was pleased at any time to add special invitations to his people, the words themselves implied the persons Jesus had in view, and for whom they were intended. As for example: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," &c. Matt. xi. 28. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," &c. John vii. 37. Here we discover the corresponding affections in his people wrought by grace *within* answering to the call *without*. The invitation is to them that *labour* and are *heavy laden* under the burthen of sin, and that *thirst* after Christ from a sense of the want of him; but how is this suited to the case of those who hold forth an unqualified invitation and promise to *all?* Christ himself hath drawn the line of distinction between those cases as luminous as if written with a sunbeam. Of the *one* he saith, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me," &c. John vi. 37. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," &c. John x. 27. Of the *other* (that is, the *rest*, as Paul calls them, Rom. xi. 7.) Jesus saith, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word," &c. John viii. 43. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you," &c. John x. 26.

But wherefore should I spend time in selecting particular instances in proof of a truth which the bible of God, considered as one great whole, hath established and made clear from beginning to end. The Son of God himself, when towards the close of his ministry he addressed his Father, summed up the whole of his eventful design in coming upon earth in these words: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John xvii. 2. Until a man can make it appear by a new system of logic, that by the *many* Christ here particularized, he meant the *whole of mankind*, nothing can be more decisive than that Christ's power over all flesh was to give eternal life to as many only, and no more, as the Father had given him for that express purpose. My reprover shall, if he please, (and if he be bold enough to do it, in spite of these truths) say again, as he hath said before—Jesus and his apostles knew of no inability than that of the will to prevent any man from being saved. But if he doth, humbler souls will only find cause therefrom to adore God's patience, and to be astonished at man's presumption. For my part I shall take the other side of the question, and say, (though with the most profound reverence) I humbly conceive, both from the words of Christ, as well as the general analogy of scripture on this subject, the Son of God never could nor did make a single offer or invitation of eternal life to any but to such as the Father hath given to him. And the word of God shall be the umpire, whether my gospel (as my reprover is pleased to call it) or his, is most at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles.

But against those great and immoveable truths, my reprover hath brought forward certain quotations from scripture, and which, he conceives, will throw down the impregnable fortress. Unhappily, however, for his cause, there is not one of the portions of the word of

God he hath chosen, but what becomes the very reverse of what he intended, and more or less confirms the truth he wishes to oppose.

For example. He quotes the case of Christ weeping over Jerusalem, and saith, that Jesus wept over the inhabitants of that city, saying, " How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." It is astonishing how men untaught of God pervert the scripture of truth. Had my opponent been divinely instructed concerning this sorrow of Christ, he would have understood that Christ was not weeping over the loss of any of his people in relation to their *everlasting welfare*, (for that Jesus knew, and had before said was impossible, John vi. 37, and x. 27.) but his sorrow was excited in the prospect of their *temporal* distresses, in the destruction of their beloved city, then hastening upon them.

My reprover hath made an error in his quotation, whether by design or ignorance I know not. As he states it, Jesus wept over the *inhabitants* of Jerusalem. As the word of God states it, Jesus wept over the *city*. A small difference, perhaps, in his esteem; but a very material one in the thing itself. And had he attended more diligently to the history of this event, as he ought to have done before he brought it forward, he might have seen (for it requires no *spiritual* discernment to discover *natural* truths) that it hath nothing to do with the point in question.

In proof I beg the reader to consult the evangelists *in loco*, Luke xix. 41—44. and with it what Jesus had said before on the same subject. Luke xiii. 34,35. And if he hath at hand my ' Poor Man's Commentary' on those passages, and will condescend to read my observations on both, I shall take it kindly. But if not, let him look at the scripture statement simply as it is; and he cannot fail to discover that through the whole the

Lord is speaking of Jerusalem in a *national* point of view. It is of *temporal* visitations, in the destruction of the city; and not of *eternal* concerns respecting the everlasting welfare of *his people.* Often the Lord, as he said, would have gathered them as a nation to acknowledge him for the Messiah, and as a *nation* they would *not.* Therefore their *house* (not the *souls* of Christ's people dwelling there) was left to them desolate. And because they rejected, and afterwards crucified "the Lord of life and glory," they were rejected as a *nation.* And Christ's prediction followed, when the army of Titus Vespasian sacked Jerusalem, and "took away both their place and nation," John xi. 48.

And as a collateral proof of these things it is worthy remark, that when the affecting apostrophe of our Lord was followed with the final commission to his apostles to begin their ministry at Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 47. what Jesus had predicted also concerning his people in the beloved city was graciously fulfilled. Their house, indeed, was left unto them desolate; but those Jerusalem sinners, then called by sovereign grace from the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost, truly said, "blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Three thousand souls were converted on the spot. And we are told that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Mark! not such as would save themselves, according to my reprover's creed, where nothing but a man's will is wanting, but such as *should* be saved; that is, "whom the Lord made willing in the day of his power," Acts ii. 34. vi. 47. Psalm cx. 3. What will my opponent say to these things? Will he have candour enough to acknowledge, from such a scriptural statement of facts, that it was the house, and not the Lord's people dwelling in Jerusalem, that was left destitute, and over which Jesus wept?

Again. My opponent hath stumbled into another

error in his quotations. He reproves me in my supposed forgetfulness of scripture, and brings forward certain passages to manifest his own forgetfulness. This is no uncommon thing in life.

'The reverend Doctor,' saith he, 'had totally forgotten that the scriptures of the old and new testament abound in language the most pathetic, alluring, and persuasive. Surely, he need to be reminded of the method which the Almighty himself took with his rebellious people, when he expostulated with and intreated them saying, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "Come, and let us reason together," &c.'

This may, for aught I know, in his view, be very fine reasoning. But I should not only have totally forgotten scripture, but with it have lost common sense also, to discover where it lies. For how my reprover, or indeed any man alive, can make the Lord's expostulation with *his people* the ground of argument for using alluring words with any that are *not* his people, I am at a loss to conceive. It is indeed a curious kind of logic altogether, and happily for the world, is as yet untaught. God expostulates with the seed of Jacob, whom he hath taken into covenant with him. And my reprover would take the persuasive words of scripture to invite the seed of Esau, who are not in covenant with him, and whom the Lord himself calls "the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever." Mal. i. 4. God invites his house of Israel. And by this reasoning, his servants are to invite the house of bondage. God allures his chosen. And his servants are to follow this example by doing the reverse, and aiming to allure all mankind. This is the first instance I have ever seen (and for the sake of common sense I hope it will be the last) where a man takes the reverse of a proposition to support his cause! Through what spectacles do such men read their bibles?

Once more. My reprover endeavours to press into

his service (as all freewillers more or less have done) that blessed scripture of Christ; "God so loved the world," &c. John iii. 16. But here, as before, the poor man is unhappy in his selection. This is a glorious truth, indeed, and as Paul speaking of it, saith, "and worthy of all acceptation." And all true preachers of the word should be for ever sounding such rich proclamations of mercy in all places of concourse. For most certain it is in every instance throughout the world, wheresoever, and to whomsoever the Lord gives grace to believe the record God hath given of his dear Son, salvation will assuredly follow; "all that believe in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

But before any faithful preacher would presume from hence to invite all men, which promises everlasting life only to the believer; he would do well to consider those two great points contained in the bosom of the scripture; first, what Christ meant by the world; and secondly, what is the ground work of faith or believing.

In relation to the former, what Christ meant by the world; I take for granted, that no man, who is at all acquainted with the word of God, can for a moment imagine that by the world Jesus meant all mankind. As well might it be supposed, that when Cæsar Augustus (as we read Luke ii. 1.) issued a decree that all the world should be taxed, the whole earth was included? when we know that he possessed no such power, his empire being limited to Rome and her provinces. Or when Paul told the Colossians, that the gospel which was come to them was come also into all the world, Col. i. 6. the apostle meant the globe; whereas it is notorious, that the vast continent of America, with numberless other parts of the earth, are of modern discovery.

By comparing scripture with scripture, there can be no question, but that Christ when speaking, as in

those words, of God's love to the world, meant the gentile church; which, in contradiction to Jewish nations, (who considered all nations but themselves void of divine favour) is included in the covenant. So God had declared by Isaiah, xlix. 6. "And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." Hence Jesus himself, when speaking of the same subject said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring," John ii. 2. And hence, John also, when writing to the church, and speaking of Christ as their propitiation for sin, added, "and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. As if he had said, not for our's only who are of the jewish church, but for the gentile church also throughout the world. But that this grace extended only to the church throughout the world wheresoever scattered, and not to all mankind, to whom Christ was not given as a covenant, is evident, from our Lord's own words; where he draws the line of everlasting distinction between his church and the world. Of the former he saith, "I pray for them." Of the latter, in the same verse, he saith, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine; and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them," John xvii. 9, 10, 16. See also John xv. 18, 19.

In relation to the latter, which is the ground work of faith or believing, the scriptures with one voice declare faith to be the gift of God, Eph. ii. 3. A man can no more create faith than breathe a world. And after all the invitations and wooings of freewillers to the world, certain it is that the one cannot give, neither the other receive faith to believe, unless it be given from above. "Unto you, (saith the apostle, speaking

to the church) it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," Phil. i. 29. and hence, Christ is declared to be both the "author and finisher of faith," Heb. xii. 2. With how little reason therefore, must it appear, that my reprover hath called this scripture into the support of his argument to make it speak what it was never intended. As if all men in the world were alike in a salvable state, and Jesus and his apostles (as my reprover saith) in direct contradiction to the whole tenor of scripture, know nothing to prevent it but a man's own will.

But here, no doubt, the whole body of freewillers will arise to a man, in order to bring forth their objections against a truth, which, if at once admitted and confirmed, must overthrow their whole system; as the Lord overthrew the tables of the money changers in the temple, when he drove out the whole party before him. Perhaps it will be demanded, (for such demands have been made before by men of this complexion, and not unfrequently in terms of reproach against God awfully daring) that upon the presumption my statement is correct, to what purpose did Christ preach himself, or send his servants to do so, in the hearing of those which cannot, from the causes before assigned, receive the truth?

Though this question is not my province to answer, (and very sure I am the Lord himself will fully answer it in due season, and justify his sovereignty before the congregated world) yet, in the mean time, it may not be improper upon the present occasion to observe, that there is a most satisfactory reason always at hand, wherefore "the gospel must first be published (as our Lord himself hath said) before the end be, among all nations," Mark xiii. 10.

The Lord's people are a scattered people. They are mingled with and live among all the varieties of the

earth. They must, therefore, be gathered as the Lord hath said: see Jeremiah xxxi. 10, and xxxii. 37, &c. Gal. iii. 29.—And agreeably to this, the Lord Jesus hath described their bringing home and bringing in as among the blessed tokens of the latter day dispensation. "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," (Luke xiii. 29; Mark xiii. 27.) Hence, therefore, if need be, the gospel shall be sent into all places where they are, and be preached in the audience of the people after the example of Christ and his apostles. And if there be but a single soul belonging to Christ, (as he calls his people, Mark ix. 41,) in any place, thither for that soul's sake, the gospel shall come. Corinth was a populous city, full of sin and uncleanness, even to a proverb. But God had a people there dwelling. Thither, therefore, Paul came to preach. And in a vision of the night the Lord bid his servant not to fear, but to speak and hold not his peace: adding, by way of encouragement, "for I have much people in this city," (Acts xviii. 6—10. If all the Corinthians had been the Lord's people; or if, (as my reprover saith,) Jesus and his apostles knew of nothing to prevent their being saved but a man's own will; wherefore did the Lord so particularly mark his much people; or not tell Paul to make the like invitations to all the city?

But while this explains the cause wherefore the Lord will have his gospel preached in the audience of all; while the gathering from among them his chosen, is the sole object for which the gospel is sent; it must be observed, (how offensive soever it be to the pride of human freewill,) that in all preachings since Christ returned to glory, as well as before, the same events invariably take place: "While for them, for whom it is designed, it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; to them to whom it is not, it is not

given," (Matt. xiii. 11.) Daniel shewed the same by prophecy, when looking into gospel days he said, "many shall be purified, and made white and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand: but the wise shall understand," (Dan. xii. 10.) And our apostle, in one of his epistles to this very church of Corinth, not only confirms the same, but added to it a solemn assurance, which, coming as it doth from an inspired writer, might have been thought sufficient to have silenced every freewiller. "Now thanks be unto God, (saith Paul,) which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." And mark what follows: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death: and to the other of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 14 and 16.)

Now let the reader pause. Let him gather into one view the several testimonies of Christ's personal ministry which have been brought before him. Let him observe with due attention, the striking feature of character that marks the whole, between his general preaching before the multitude: and his special and personal invitations to his people. Let him as faithfully notice what Jesus himself declared to have been the cause, for which he spake to the multitude in parables; while in secret expounding all things in order to his disciples, Mark iv. 34. Let him not lose sight both of what God the Holy Ghost commanded, and what the Lord Jesus confirmed, when he said, "therefore they could not believe, because he had blinded their eyes and hardened their heart:" (Isa. vi. 9; John xii. 39, 40.) Let the reader, I say, keep these things in remembrance; let him look with an eagle-eye of the severest criticism over my tract, prefixed for this very purpose to this Appendix; and then let him say, (for to his conscience

in the sight of God I appeal,) is there a line in it, but what is formed on the same model as Christ's preaching? Is there a vestige of an argument to be discovered through the whole of it, in which it can be shewn that it is 'at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles?'

And let my reader at the same time, while judging for me, no less judge for himself. Let him say what credit is due to the daring assertion that 'Jesus and his apostles knew of no other inability which prevents man from being saved but the will;' while such palpable facts in direct opposition to it, as he hath here beheld of Christ's personal ministry are before him? Did the Son of God indeed rejoice in spirit, (as we are told he did,) and thank the Father that he had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes? Luke x. 21; and doth my reprover in the face of so decided a testimony, declare that nothing is wanting but the will to prevent their being saved? Is man's ability to be complimented at the expence of God's truth? Will he bolster up the self-righteous pharisees of the present day against the doctrine of the new birth, with telling them of the strength of their own attainments in their will; while that thundering sentence Jesus pronounced on the self-righteous pharisees of his days, is still in our ears; when he said, "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 29, 30.)

From the portraits of Christ's personal ministry, taken under different views, let us now proceed to examine what were the leading features in the same department of conduct in his apostles. And sure I am that we shall still find one and the same trait of character distinguishing the servants, as was observable in the master.

To begin at their ordination. When Jesus sent forth his twelve disciples to the ministry, their general com-

mission was to teach, and to preach, and to heal the sick, and the like. And the Lord then limited their office to the house of Israel. "Go not into the way of the gentiles, and into any of the city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But in all those directions, which occupy the whole chapter, not a single word of invitation or offer is in it from beginning to end. See Matt. x. throughout.

And when the Lord sent other seventy also, as we read Luke x. besides those general invitations nearly as before, the Lord added a very blessed direction for their observance, in the event of which they should discover his people from the rest. "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again," (Luke x. 5, 6.) What will my reprover make of this? Was this discriminating grace, or was it not? Did Jesus when he gave this command, or the apostles when they received it, know, (as Verax in direct defiance of these solemn truths asserts,) there was nothing wanting but a man's will to the being saved? On the contrary, did not the Lord mean, and his disciples clearly understand, by the expression of their peace resting where the son of peace was found, similar to what followed Paul's preaching afterwards at Antioch; "that as many as were ordained to eternal life believed?" (Acts xiii. 48.)

From the ordination of the apostles, let the reader follow their footsteps in the exercise of their ministry during the whole time the Lord continueth among them, and went in and out before them: and let him examine closely if he can discover a single offer or invitation given by those faithful followers of the Lord indiscriminately to all. I have looked with carefulness on this ground, and cannot find an iota leading to the conclusion. Indeed the thing itself is impossible. The char-

ter of grace runs in a different strain. And those servants of Christ would have gone beyond their commission had they done so. Where the son of peace was found, there their peace was to rest. Where not, it was to return to them again. And it is worthy the reader's most serious observation, that when the seventy returned to the Lord with an account of the success of their ministry, Jesus called off their attention even from their triumph over devils, to an object of infinitely higher moment, in that "their names were written in heaven," (Luke x. 17—20.) Will my reprover say in this instance, also, this predilection of grace had nothing to do with the success of their embassy, for Jesus and his apostles knew of no prevention to the being saved but a man's will.

Following the memoirs of those servants of Jesus after his return to glory: if we trace the history of their ministry through the Acts of the Apostles, we find the same line of conduct, running like a golden thread, through the whole. The Lord had now extended their commission to go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; but their ministry was still confined to preach to all; not to invite all; to hold up Christ; not to offer Christ. My opponent, perhaps, as in a case or two before, may perceive no difference, but the difference is as great as between one man's talking of treasure and another possessing it; between the sight of food through a window and the partaking of it for sustenance.

To preach the gospel, and to proclaim salvation in the audience of all sinners wheresoever they came, this was the apostles province. And the same will all faithful servants of the word do now, who are ordained by the Holy Ghost. "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," (John iii. 14, 15.) But here are the limits to human powers. No man can go

further. Moses himself went no further. He lifted up the serpent as commanded, as a type of Christ, that the bitten Israelite might look upon it and live. But we read of no offers nor persuasions, (Num. xxi. 8, 9.) Neither did the apostles in their general preaching. If, indeed, from general to special cases, (as we shall observe hereafter,) they found their minds directed to the Lord to act in a more personal manner, their history fully explains the cause. But otherwise they were too well taught of God. They dared not to invade the office of God the Holy Ghost. To preach Christ they knew to be their province. To persuade to the acceptation of Christ they knew to be his. And Paul perfectly understood this when he said to the church, "for do I now persuade men or God; or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," (Gal. i. 9, 13.)

If I stop my reader for a moment, from the pursuit of the apostle's history, (it shall only be the moment, and in a way of parenthesis, for indeed it merits no more,) I will beg to observe the conduct my reprover hath manifested towards me on this occasion. He saith that 'my tract forbids all invitations to sinners to come to Christ.' And had he stopped here, and at the same time done me the justice to have said that my tract forbids all invitations 'given by men unauthorized of God, he would have been right, and I should not have complained. But when he adds, that 'it discourages even the declaration to them of what Christ has done and suffered for sin,' I stand amazed at the bold untruth. How any man in the face of that tract could deliberately write down what in the moment of writing he knew to be a falsehood, (and a falsehood impossible to escape detection,) is to me astonishing. I beg the reader to convince himself by examining the tract. I have twice read it over since I read the charge; and sure I am nothing of the kind can be found there. And the church of Christ before whom my numerous wri-

tings are, can find nothing among them to ground the accusation. And that part of the church where my personal labours are exercised too well know, without my saying so, with what sweat of the face I am unremittingly employed in holding forth Christ and his finished salvation before poor sinners. What shall I answer my reprover on this ground? Truly I will recompence his calumny with my prayers.—Sincerely do I hope the Lord will pardon it, as I most cordially do.

Prosecuting yet further the apostles history, in the department of their ministry, we may observe, that when at any time from general preaching before the multitude, they proceeded in their apostolic power, to speak personally to the cases of any among their audience, here we discern the Lord's special ordination. It is too well known to need more than the observation, that the apostles, among other miraculous gifts, possessed the faculty of "discerning spirits," (1 Cor. xii. 9, 10.) Hence, when at any time amidst the multitude, the apostles discovered any of the Lord's chosen ones present, not unfrequently we find that authority called into exercise. Thus Paul, preaching at Lystra, perceived in a cripple present, that "he had faith to be healed," (Acts xiv. 8, 10.) Hence Peter going down to the saints, which dwelt at Lydda, did the same by Eneas, Acts xi. 32—34. Hence Paul, at a meeting appointed for preaching the word, persuaded as well as expounded. And the reason follows: there were "some which believed the things which were spoken." And on the contrary, to shew that no persuasion of man can avail, where grace is not given, it is added, "and some believed not." And the contemplation of the both, brought to the apostle's mind the words of the Holy Ghost, and which he immediately applied. See Acts xxviii. 23 to the end. And in like manner, when the same preacher was at Antioch, and delivered that memorable sermon recorded Acts xiii. 16, &c. the event corresponded to the same. To you, said Paul, (speak-

ing to the people of God which were in the throng,) is the word of this salvation sent, verse 26. To the rest he said, "behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days; a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you," (verse 41.) And that the church might not be at a loss to trace the whole to its proper source, in the close of the sermon we are told, that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," (verse 48.) Had my reprover been present to have directed Paul on this occasion, instead of God the Holy Ghost, what wooings and soothings would he have urged him to use, in order to bring over those despisers to a better way of thinking; convinced, (as it should seem he is,) that 'Jesus and his apostles knew of no prevention to a man being saved but the will.'

From the personal labours of those servants of Christ, if we follow the history of their ministry in their writings, we shall find the same features of character uniformly marking all. Indeed here we more plainly discover this leading truth; because the whole of those writings are addressed "only to the church." My reprover hath gathered many passages from Paul's epistles, by way of shewing how the apostles warned and taught, and affectionately entreated the people. And he might have filled as many pages as he hath lines, had he pleased; and when done, he would but have tended the more to have strengthened my argument and thrown down his own.

Poor man! he is very unsuccessful in appealing to scripture. And he serves to prove how much to be lamented it is, that so many read their bibles to so little purpose. Had he only read the title to all the Epistles, he would have seen that the whole is sent to the church, and not to the world. Like letters directed to certain persons or communities, the contents of which belong only to them unto whom they are sent, and to no other. So that neither Paul nor Peter, James, John, nor Jude,

have a line of invitation in all their epistles to the rest, (as they are emphatically called, Acts v. 13; Rom. xi. 7.) but as one of them expresseth it, and all intended it, they sent their epistles unto them, (saith Peter,) "that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," (2 Pet. i. 1.) I beg the reader, in confirmation of what I say, to look at the title of each of the epistles; and he will find all of them are addressed to the church of God, and not to the world. And of consequence, the whole of my opponent's arguments from this quarter, turns out not unsimilar to those witnesses which are sometimes subpœned in our courts of law, where their testimony is rendered nugatory by an *alibi.*

And yet, upon such mistaken principles, my reprover, as if he had gained his cause, leaps at once to a conclusion; and, with an air of triumph, sits down in what David terms "the seat of the scornful," and exulting in much self-applause, exclaims: 'But all these, according to the phraseology of what is called the true gospel, is nothing else than winning and wooing.' And not content, nor resting here, but flushed with supposed victory, and following up the manners of modern times, in his able conduct in the chair, that the usual compliments in the end he may not lose, he adds: 'What think you? (addressing, I suppose, his colleagues,) if the apostle was presented with this tract, would he approve of its title? I am mistaken if his holy indignation would not rise again, and impel him to say, let it be anathema maranatha.'

Surely, as I before remarked, in that little tract, (which this learned man so unmercifully falls upon,) if the subject was not so truly awful, one might be tempted to smile. The *anathema* of popery, however near, is not yet to be feared. And for the *anathema maranatha* of my reprover, though pronounced by him *ex cathedra,* I really feel no apprehension. In this award he hath made a little mistake. (But little mis-

takes with him are no great things, however destructive to common sense and reason.) The *anathema* among the Jews, (for from them Paul borrowed the thought,) was confined only to persons. Indeed, from its very nature, it could have reference to no other but persons. My reprover however transfers it to a tract. But the capability of a tract sustaining such a punishment as belonged only to God to inflict, and exceeds man's power to impose, (for in this sense the Jews meant the *anathema*,) remains to be shewn. However, whether person or tract, or both, let the man have his way, his *anathemas* are harmless. It is my mercy, the sentence comes but from my unknown reprover; and not from the well known apostle.

Had I, indeed, contradicted the apostle, and while he so solemnly tells the church, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," (Rom. ix. 16.) I had said, and called Paul to witness it too, that Jesus and his apostles knew of no inability but the will to any man's being saved; had I taken Paul's words, to make Paul contradict himself in 'offers and invitations to the world,' which he sent only to the church, and pleaded his authority and example for so doing; had I gathered from his writings the many loving expressions there addressed to the saints of God, and used them to the reverse of what he intended, to win over all men to the faith, in direct defiance of the apostle's own words, in which he saith, "the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded;" Rom. xi. 7. in either of those cases, then indeed, I might have deprecated the just anger of this "chosen vessel," Acts ix. 15. in holding forth under his name, but contrary to all his ministry, indiscriminate offers to the unchosen world

But enough on this ground. It is time to forget every thing of a personal nature, both as it concerns myself, and my opponent, to attend to the one only point which is important in this controversy, namely, the truth itself.

I have now gone over the principal ground of inquiry concerning the ministry of the apostles in this department of their office; as was before trodden in quest of the same exercises of their master. And as men ascending an hill, after some labour, may stop, and look around the country they have passed; so let the reader take a leisurely survey of what he hath seen, both as it relates to the Lord and his apostles; and under the grace of God, make a fair and faithful conclusion in his own mind from the whole.

If there be a point in the word of God ascertained with more than usual clearness, the very one asserted by the apostle is this. Neither was it confined to the ministry of Christ and his apostles; for the Holy Ghost, by Paul, expressly declares that it was preached to Abraham. "The scripture (saith he) foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, (not a man's will) preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." (Gal. iii. 8.) And to shew the firmness and everlasting security of it, God confirmed it with all its promises in Christ, both by word and oath. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord," &c. (Gen. xxii. 16.) Is it possible any man can believe God thus pledged himself, by word and oath, to fulfil all his promises in Christ; and yet there still remained a peradventure, a yea and nay gospel, subject to doubt?—And could a blessing, which by the oath of God became irreversible, be left for security, in any part of it, on the free-will of man? Pause! What! did God thus swear by himself to make the thing certain; as if he had said, I will cease to be God, if I do not bless Abraham and his seed in Christ: and did the Lord after this, subject the possibility of failure upon the patriarch's faith or obedience, and that of his seed, for the event? Let the point rest here, for the reader will remember it was with this postulatum I entered on my defence. Let the reader judge whether I have fulfilled my engagements

by proofs. And according to the event, whether the title-page be not correct, founded, as it is, on God's word. The true gospel is no yea and nay gospel; "for all the promises of God in Christ Jesus, are yea and amen unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 18—20.)

And when the reader hath viewed and reviewed, the many proofs lain before him in this appendix of the ministry pursued by Christ and his apostles, in this department of their preaching; when he hath duly examined the several features of character by which that preaching was marked; both in their general plan of holding forth the gospel to the multitude, and making special and personal invitations to the Lord's people from among them; let it be shewn whether the gospel I have set forth in all my ministry and writings be not formed upon the same model; instead, as my opponent hath said, that it is 'at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles.'—Yea, without going beyond the proof in the tract, and prefixed as it is to this appendix, for the express purpose of examination. Let the sample here given be strictly scrutinized. Let my jurors be enlightened men, taught of God the Holy Ghost. Let them be such on whom a saving work by regeneration hath passed upon them; and such as are brought into an acquaintance with the plague of their own heart, and know what Christ is to the soul: let such sit in judgment upon me, and by their verdict let my character, as a minister of Christ, stand or fall.

I pass over all that my opponent hath said of my virulence. We are poor judges in our own cause. For my part, I rather fear that that little work is more reprehensible for lightness, than anger; for gentleness, than severity. However, be this as it may, there is nothing in it of a personal nature. I wage war not with men but their errors. And here I dare not but contend, and that earnestly, "for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

My opponent hath said, that the tendency of my tract is, 'to relax ministerial exertions.' If he means persons holding out of promises where God hath not given them, I plead guilty. And while I read God's everlasting war which he hath sworn to have with Amalek; (Exod xvii. 16.) and his indignation for ever against the seed of Esau: (Mal. i. 4.) while I hear Jesus declaring the good seed to represent the children of the kingdom; and the tares the children of the wicked one; (Matt. xiii. 38.) while I hear God the Holy Ghost forbidding the apostles even to preach the word in Asia; and when they would have gone to do the same in Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not: while these scriptures are in view, is it not enough to make a man tremble to hear men wooing and winning all that come in their way, and saying, 'that Jesus and his apostles knew of no cause to prevent a man being saved but his own will?'

Neither shall I less offend, when I add, that in my view, it is among the most awful signs of the present times, and a sure presage of divine judgment, that so many rush into the ministry unsent, unauthorized, unanointed of God the Holy Ghost! I would put my hand under the feet of the poorest of God's servants, who comes in the Lord's name, and by the Lord's authority, bringing "good tidings of good, publishing salvation:" but I would no less beg the Lord in mercy to stop the mouth of all who speak "a vision out of their own heart," and of whom the Lord saith, "they shall not profit this people." (Jer. xxiii. *passim.*)

Were I disposed to retort upon my reprover, I might find large room for so doing. But I wave all this. Should God the Holy Ghost give him a clearer view of divine truths, (which if it be his holy will I earnestly pray for) he will stand amazed at his present presumption, and in silence bend to the sovereignty of God's free grace, cheerfully submitting to his own free will.

TRUE PORTRAIT

OF

ANTINOMIANISM;

BEING

AN ADMONITORY LETTER

TO THE

REV. JAMES BIDLAKE.

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ!"—Rom. xiv. 10.

TRUE PORTRAIT,

&c. &c.

SIR,

AFTER a lapse of several months, I had thought to have heard no more from you on the subject of our controversy; my bookseller, however hath convinced me of my error, by sending me this morning a copy of your *second* pamphlet.

I take for granted, that the Lord, who overrules the minds of all men, hath some gracious design for good in the appointment of this providence. And therefore, though at my time of life I long to get into winter quarters, to "cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils," and to enjoy more communion with God; yet when the Lord calls to action I dare not shrink back. Indeed, in the present instance it affords me the opportunity of performing a duty which I owe to God, to you, and to my own conscience; and which I sadly neglected (I know not how) in my former answer to your *first* publication, but which now this renewed occasion will enable me more fully to discharge.

In the fever of your anger, when you sent forth your first pamphlet, you little considered, I believe, that the cause pending between you and me, hath not, neither can have, its final decision 'in the judgment of men.' It must have a rehearing, and rejudging also, and that in the most solemn, impartial, and decisive manner before the tribunal of God.

The title-page of your *first* publication contains, perhaps without exception, the boldest decision which ever was pronounced by one sinner upon another. And

what is infinitely more awful to consider, it is the most daring assumption, in defiance of the divine command, of the sole prerogative of God, who hath reserved to himself this sovereignty: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth!" Rom. xiv. 4.

You say in that title-page, 'the True Gospel by Dr. Hawker SHEWN to be at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles!'—Shewn! by whom? Had you sent forth your pamphlet with a *charge* only, of such high crimes and misdemeanours as are implicated in the thing itself, and with some little modesty had hinted *your* suspicions that my writings and preachings were at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles;—such an accusation against an elder, according to scripture authority, required *two or three witnesses* before it could be received by the church, 1 Tim. v. 19. But Mr. Bidlake disdains all restrictions. Singly and alone—unsent and unauthorized—he leaps at once into the judgment seat, and, in violation of all decency and good order, acting both as judge and jury, the cause is tried, cast and condemned; yea, and sentence also passed solely by himself. — 'Dr. Hawker's gospel,' according to his verdict, 'is *shewn* to be at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles.' In following up our correspondence, it struck me, that as all argument is lost upon you, and even the most complete refutation from scripture you are bomb proof against, I would send you an admonitory letter, to assuage (if possible) the effervescence of your mind. Perhaps the Lord may bless it. And if not to *you*, there may be some of the Lord's people looking on what passeth between us, to whom it may be profitable. Often have I found occasion to adore the divine hand, when at any time his overruling power hath caused good to spring from evil; and made men the unconscious instruments of accomplishing the very reverse

of what they intended. "Surely, the wrath of man shall praise him: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain," Ps. lxxvi. 10.

Mistake me not. I am not going again over the ground of our controversy already trodden. Such a service would be altogether inexpedient. Your pamphlet, and my tract and appendix, are already before the public; and, as far as their province is to judge, let them decide with whom the truth is. In my answer to your *first* pamphlet, I have said all that is necessary to say in refutation. And in respect to your *second* publication now before me, if I were disposed to lengthen the controversy, truly I cannot discover a single argument of any thing new advanced by you upon the subject to make any reply necessary; — excepting, indeed, what you have thought proper to assert on the character of an antinomian, which shall be noticed in the proper place, before I finish my letter.

But, Sir, the first and principal object intended from this admonitory letter, is to call your attention to a matter of an higher nature. I have already said, that the title-page of your *first* pamphlet, is perhaps, without exception, the boldest decision which ever was pronounced by one sinner upon another. And it can need no further authority than holy scripture hath given, to say, that the Lord's judgment with whom truth is, must take place in consequence thereof "in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to his gospel," Rom. ii. 16. And as that day cannot be far remote either to you or to me, and to both may be near indeed, the anticipation of it, in relation to this event, may be our wisdom to regard, that in the language of Job it may be our inquiry, "What then shall I do when God riseth up; and when he visiteth me, what shall I answer him?" Job xxxi. 14.

In addition to the very strong and unanswerable proofs I brought from scripture in justification of my

cause in my appendix, I would now earnestly beseech you, in a day of safety, to attend to what I have yet further to propose to your most solemn consideration.

It is notorious to every one who is acquainted with my preachings or writings, that one uniform strain of doctrine runs through all. Indeed, that little tract which hath excited so much wrath in your mind, may be considered as a specimen of all I preach or write.

The sovereignty of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, manifesting his grace to his church in Christ before all worlds; and conducting her through the whole of this time-state to glory, "to be holy, and without blame before him in love" for ever; this is the one grand bottom on which I build all my discourses, whether from the pulpit or the press. The everlasting, electing, unchanging love of God the Father;—the person, glory, grace, blood-shedding, righteousness, and finished salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ;—and the equal love, grace, and favour of God the Holy Ghost, manifested to the church before all time, and in his quickening operations on every individual member of Christ's mystical body here below, leading them from grace to glory;—these are the glorious doctrines I preach. These I make the ground work of all practical godliness; and without which, nothing of true godliness can arise in the soul. Neither should I consider that sermon, or that writing on divine things finished, but miserably incomplete, and undeserving attention, where these grand truths of God were thrown in the back ground of the subject, and not brought forward as the first and last of all points to be insisted upon.

Now the question is, what authority, what precedent, what example have I for these things? If I can make it appear (and that I can most readily) from the scriptures of eternal truth, over and above the proofs to the

same amount I sent in my appendix, that Christ and his apostles preached the same; yea, that God in his trinity of persons, was the first preacher to the church of those momentous truths, and without whose proclamation we never should have known them; shall I have any cause of apprehension or fear on this ground, when I stand confronted by you before the judgment seat of Christ? Though in the warmth of an heated imagination, you have ventured to pronounce such a sentence—'Dr. Hawker's gospel *shewn* to be at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles,' will you be able to shew it then? And if not, shall I shrink before you, and be "ashamed when I speak with my enemies in the gate?"

I love to go over scriptural ground for the confirmation of scriptural things. These are final, unanswerable, decisive. And the man who withholds assent to the truths of God, when confirmed by the scriptures of God, "neither would he be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

The first blessed and glorious preacher of election, is God himself, even "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Eph. iii. 15. Hear then this Almighty Preacher in his own words!

Calling upon the church, which from everlasting he hath given to his dear Son, Jehovah thus speaks: "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold! mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth! I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment unto the gentiles," &c. And thus, having proclaimed to the church the election of his dear Son, as the head and husband of the whole "election of grace," and the elect in him; he next speaks personally to his dear Son, in reference to his glorious character and headship as Mediator. "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold

thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people,"&c. Isa. xliii. 1—8.

Is this preaching election, or is it not? And when we consider the Almightiness of the Preacher, one should be led to conceive such a decision would for ever "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

But we must not stop here. The Holy Ghost, by the apostle, most blessedly shews God the Father's election, both in preaching and in practice; and in the instance of the twin children of Isaac by Rebecca—Jacob and Esau—stamps the doctrine with an indelible seal, that eternity itself can never wear out. When Rebecca, in her pregnancy, consulted the Lord, the Lord gave her this answer: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger," Gen. xxv. 23. Now that this scripture might be clearly understood by the church, the Holy Ghost inspired the mind of his servant the apostle, to prove hereby the election by God the Father. "When Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, (not of works, but of him that calleth) it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," Rom. ix. 10—13. Can any thing be more express in point? The case of these brethren is here most fully declared, and by the Holy Ghost himself, that the whole had no one object in view but that Jehovah hereby proclaimed his purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, both in election and reprobation. It is said, in so many words, that it was "that the purpose of God according to election might stand."

Nay more. At a period of fourteen hundred years after the birth of these children, (as if to leave upon the minds of the Lord's people God's unalterable purpose concerning election and reprobation) by his servant Malachi, the last of the prophets, we find God our Father thus preaching to the church. "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau, Jacob's brother? saith the Lord. Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places. Thus saith the Lord, they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them the border of wickedness; and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever," Malachi i. 1—4.

Let any man pause over these blessed scriptures. Let him consider the Almightiness of him whose words they are. Let him ask himself what stronger terms can be conceived in favour of the great doctrine of election thus preached by God the Father; and who, with such scriptural testimony before them, will have the confidence to say, that this is 'at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles?' Neither then is mine; for after this pattern, though at an infinite distance, do I humbly copy.

And in preaching those glorious truths, I simply do as Christ commanded. "Go ye (said Jesus) into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This is the extent of the commission. They who are truly sent forth by Christ can go no further. They are simply to preach the gospel to every creature. Christ hath graciously added certain marks and signs whereby the servant of God may judge of the effect of his preaching. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Let it be supposed, for the sake of argument, that many of the seed of Esau be present when the gospel is preached, (and no doubt in every congregation more or less they are) still this is nothing to me. I do as I am commanded—"preach the gospel." But were I to go beyond this commission, and *offer*, and *persuade*, and strive with fair words to *win* and *woo* men to believe; what is this but pretending to have more mercy than God? And, to invite all men indiscriminately, must include the people against whom the Lord hath said he "hath indignation for ever!" This I dare not do, whatever others do. God himself hath declared against it. And I defy you, or any man alive, to produce a single instance in the word of God, where Christ or his apostles have so done. Paul speaks with a kind of abhorrence upon the subject. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," Gal. i. 10.

Let us next attend to the preaching of God the Son. He who, when upon earth, "spake as never man spake." Many proofs have been shewn in my appendix, of Christ's preaching election; but as a conclusive and unanswerable testimony, let us behold Christ in that memorable hour, when giving in the account of the execution of his mediatorial commission to the Father, saying, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." What doth the evangelist relate on this occasion? "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come! Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Now mark what follows. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John xvii. 1—5.

What! had Christ no power to give eternal life to any more, or to any other but those his Father had

given him? Certainly not. And for this plain scriptural reason. All the purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure of Jehovah, is alike the acts of each glorious person, and of all. For although there is a distinction of persons in the Godhead, and each glorious person hath condescended to make himself known by distinct acts of personality; yet, in the essence of the Godhead, the whole three persons are one God. One in being, one in will, one in design, and in all the purposes of covenant grace and love; according to the old maxim of the schools, *opera trinitatis, ad extra sunt indivisa.* Hence, we hear the Lord say, "I, and my Father are one," John x. 30. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," John vi. 37, 38. Hence, their names are said to be written in the book of life:" a thing perfectly unnecessary if all the world were written there. And hence, the prophet saith, that the "flocks must all pass again under the hand of him that telleth them," Jer. xxx. 13. A positive proof that they have passed before. "For the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. And hence, in this very chapter, we hear Christ making the strongest discrimination between his people and the world. "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them," John xvii. 9, 10.

Now, Sir, if this be not preaching election, I know not, neither can any man alive explain what election means. Mr. Bidlake hath been endeavouring to twist the words of Christ in his preaching and discourses, to do away, if possible, this doctrine. He hath done as all free-willers do, make an appeal to human reasoning and argument on the occasion. But it is not what human reason thinks, but what God hath said. The point is

the simplest in the world. If Mr. Bidlake, or any other free-willer, can produce a single positive proof from scripture where Christ hath invited one of the people against whom the Father hath said, he "hath indignation for ever;" this would be to charge the Son of God with inconsistency; and do by this Almighty Saviour, as he hath done by me, a poor sinner—shew Christ to be at variance with himself and his apostles. But as this cannot be done, it matters not all the twistings and perversions Mr. Bidlake may give to the word of God; nothing he can say will do away the certain truth. The Son of God, when upon earth, preached in all its fulness, election.

And in relation to God the Holy Ghost, the whole bible from beginning to end, (which is from his inspiration) is holding forth God's election of his people Israel. The whole may be summed up, and indeed is summed up in these words by his servant the apostle: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." And the reason is demanded, in order to give a more decided confirmation of the truth—"Wherefore?" to which is immediately answered, "according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not ear, unto this day," Rom. vii. 8.

Is it so then, that Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, hath been everlastingly preaching election, and shall I shrink from it? Shall I be told that my preaching is 'at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles,' when such palpable testimony to the contrary are in the word of God? "Let mine adversary write his book, I will take it upon my shoulders and bind it as a crown to me," Job xxxi. 31—36. "The Lord is on my side: I will not fear what man can do unto me," Ps. cxviii. 6.

It were a superfluous service to inquire, what were the great leading points in the ministry of the apostles,

after the view we have taken of the ministry of God in his trinity of persons. As inspired men, they spake, as well as wrote, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and unquestionably the whole college formed the substance of all their discourses upon the model given them by the Holy Ghost.

Paul, the chief of all the apostles in point of labour, beside the continual mention he makes in all his epistles of the election and elect of God, in one of his chapters to the Romans, argues the point with a supposed free-willer, such as my opponent, and thus contends for the right of God's sovereignty. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." And the apostle instanceth in the case of Pharaoh, the condition of the reprobate: in that God raised him up for the express purpose, to shew in him his power in hardening him; while shewing his grace and mercy to his chosen Israel in calling them.

And foreseeing what a mighty hue and cry this would raise in the minds of those who would be thought more merciful than their Maker, the apostle in a masterly manner puts words, by way of a question, into the mouth of all such men; and which answered, as is answered by inspiration, might, one would have supposed, for ever have put to silence the ignorance of foolish man. "Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault?" And Oh! what words of trembling to those "who run upon the thick bosses of the buckler of Almighty God. Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. ix. 14—24.

Was Paul then a follower of the holy Persons in the Godhead in the preaching election, or was he not?

It ceases to be a question. Do we not find him dwelling upon it, and speaking of the high privileges the elect enjoy in the divine favour? Yea, so earnest was he that the church should be able to ascertain the certainty of their election, that he gives the Thessalonians several weighty tokens by which they could not fail of knowing their own personal election. See 1 Thess. i. 1—4.

And was the apostle Peter less earnest in the establishment of the church in the doctrine? His epistle shews it is addressed to the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 2. And like Paul, he enforceth the importance that every child of God should know, and be able to ascertain his election of God. "Wherefore (saith he) the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

And how very sweetly doth John the beloved apostle call "the elect lady and her children whom he loved in the truth; and of the children of her elect sister?" 2 John i. 13.

And Jude's whole epistle is addressed "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," Jude 1.

Am I thus surrounded with such a cloud of witnesses, all preachers of election? Do all the Persons in the Godhead preach it; and all the inspired apostles preach it? And shall I be apprehensive of error in following such examples? Shall I, on this account, dread that great day of God, when Jesus will send his angels and "gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven?" Mark xiii. 27.

Sir, I have no fears, I have no apprehensions, notwithstanding the decision you have made. That God who in his trinity of persons first made known, and preached election to the church, will not condemn my humble imitation.

But, Sir, let those tremble who preach it not. The want of proclaiming it to the church is among the awful and portentous signs of the present day. Luther in his prophecies of the last times, declared, that whenever the church of God relaxed in those doctrines, and the ministers held them back from the people's view, that church was not far from desolation. It is our mercy amidst the sad defect of many congregations who are gone away from the old pure gospel of their fathers, that " even at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace," Rom. xi. 5. And as long as the Lord hath this remnant to call, so long will he keep our candlestick in its place. But when the whole elect of God are gathered in, for whose sake alone the world itself stands, then cometh the end; and all without, like the scaffolding of a building, erected only for the preservation of the structure, shall be taken down, " and the place thereof know it no more."

So much, Sir, with respect to admonition on this first and most momentous part of my Letter; which I leave with you for the cool consideration of a dispassionate hour. I shall now pass on to offer a few observations on your second pamphlet.

I have in vain looked over the several pages of it, in order, if possible, to have found somewhat new and interesting which might merit a reply. But, indeed and in truth, I can discover nothing of the kind. You call your pamphlet, ' Truth Vindicated; or a Series of Remarks on some of the Leading Doctrines of the Gospel.' But the fact is, it is a series of remarks made up of human reasoning, not from God's revelation in the gospel.

In proof, and to shew the emptiness of it, you have

quibbled about what I said in my appendix, that all the epistles were sent to the church, and to the church only. And had you been able to have disproved it, gladly would you have done it. Instead of which, you think that you have made a mighty discovery, in that three of the epistles were sent to persons; namely, Timothy and Titus; and in the confidence of your mind you say, 'What doth he think, I wonder, of the epistles to Timothy and Titus? To which I answer, precisely the same as I thought before. Timothy and Titus were bishops or elders of the churches where they ministered. Paul, therefore, sent his epistles to them for the use of the church. And had you only looked into the next epistle to Philemon, you might have read that Paul wrote it not to Philemon only, but to "the church of God in his house," (Philemon 2.)

I should not have thought this worth correcting, had you not added it to another observation of your's, of a more serious aspect, and which, in the moment you wrote it, you could not but know to be an untruth. You say, (page 26,) 'the Doctor, as if conscious that an examination of the contents of the epistles would undermine his alleged reasoning, is anxious that the attention of his readers should be confined principally to their titles.'

Is this true, Sir? Did not Mr. Bidlake himself, when he wrote it, know that it was false? Let any man look through my appendix of thirty-two pages, and examine the whole minutely, and then let him, as an honest man, say whether I have not run over both the epistles and gospels in any and every part where the subject had connection, to bring forth evidences to the truths I asserted? I told you then, and I tell you now, and I defy your whole party to disprove what I say, that it is to the church, and to the church only, the apostles wrote.

And this brings to my recollection your former treat-

ment of me in your first publication, of a similar charge of equal falseness, and which you knew to be false when you wrote it. 'That,' said you, (pages 5 and 6 of your pamphlet,) 'which in Dr. Hawker's tract assumes the appellation of the true gospel, forbids all invitations to come to Christ; it discourages even the declaration to them of what Christ hath done and suffered for sin.' The first part of this is truth, as I told you. Invitations to sinners given by men, unauthorized of God, I assert, hath no warrant in scripture. But when you add, that I discourage 'even the declaration to them of what Christ hath done and suffered for sin;' this is contradictory to the whole tendency both of my preaching and writing. And you knew the charge to be false in the moment you made it. Oh! fie, Sir! Do such things correspond to the character of a minister! Are they not peculiarly outrageous to the titles you have assumed in your books; the first, under the name of 'Truth.' And the second, 'Truth Vindicated.'

I remark how reluctant you are, to submit to plain matter of fact. You appear to have ransacked the epistles in order to find, if possible, a passage which might seem to favour your favourite dogma, that those writings have respect to persons out of the church, as well as in. And stumbling upon that beautiful verse of the apostle's, (2 Cor. v. 21.) "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God;" you are tickled with the fancy that this is exact to your purpose. Under this impression, with your usual air of triumph, as one already sure of victory before conflict, you thus exclaim, 'the concluding part of this sentence shews that he, (the apostle,) was referring to unregenerate sinners; and not to the church as gracious characters, who are in a state of reconciliation, and whom it

would have been preposterous to have exhorted to be reconciled.'

Alas! Mr. Bidlake, you are still in error. Paul had no reference whatever to unregenerate sinners. Neither was there any thing preposterous in what he wrote, though he was writing only to gracious characters.

Do let me intreat you in future, for your own good, and the good of the people among whom you minister, never to read scripture, by way of forming right judgment, in detached sentences; but always consult the context. It will preserve you from running into error, and prevent you making, as you have done, such hasty and ill-founded conclusions.

Both the epistles of Paul to the Corinthians have much the same title. In the former, he calls them the "church of God which is at Corinth: to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," &c. In the latter he saith much the same: "To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in all Achaia," &c. I take for granted you will hardly set up an opposition here, but confess that these expressions are wholly meant of regenerate persons.

But, as you say, that I confine my readers to the mere *titles* of the epistles, let us pass on from the titles to the *contents*.

Paul begins his *first* epistle after his usual salutation, with saying, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. 1 Cor. i. 4—8.

Here also I presume, Sir, you will allow, that such things as are here said, can be said of none but regenerate persons. The description is indeed, a beautiful statement of the church of God, and the church advanced in no small degree in the "grace that is in Christ Jesus."

And in the *second* epistle, the first and second chapters are full of the same most blessed expressions, all highly descriptive of persons in a state of grace. And the opening of the *fifth* chapter, from whence you have selected the verse you conceive to be directed to *unregenerate* sinners, the apostle riseth to a still higher note, and declares of his and their knowledge, "that if (saith he) our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!" And the whole chapter, from beginning to end, speaks of one and the same persons; so that no greater assurance can be given that it is the church of God, and that church *only*, Paul had in view, where he prays them "in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God."

And is it possible that Mr. Bidlake can be at a loss to explain these things: how the church of God, assured of heaven, and "coming behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," should yet at the same time need reconciliation with God? No child of God in a state of regeneration, and in consequence "acquainted with the plague of his own heart," can find any thing of difficulty here.

The church of Christ in her militant state, in all her members, is the subject of infirmities and corruptions from indwelling sin. Paul in this very chapter speaks of "groaning, being burthened in this earthly house." And all the faithful in Christ Jesus, from the same causes, groan also. And hence we are taught by our Lord himself in that comprehensive prayer which he commanded constantly to be used, that we should ask

for daily pardon, as we ask for daily bread. It is the child's privilege; and as a child he hath it. Hence the apostle, following the steps of his divine master, enjoins the church to keep up constant peace and reconciliation at the mercy seat, by coming "to the blood of sprinkling," to the reconciliation in Christ: using the most pursuasive of all arguments of beseeching them in Christ's stead,—because God the Father had "made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

And if you will attend a little more closely to the history of the Corinthian church, you will perceive some of the more leading points among that people, for which Paul so affectionately enjoined them to reconciliation. In the first chapter of his first epistle, he complained, that notwithstanding their high attainments in the knowledge of divine things, they had suffered to creep in among them sources of division and discord. See 1 Cor. i. 10, &c. So that when he opened his third chapter, he tells them, that he "could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Paul as a faithful servant in the church, longed to have them all of one heart and one mind. And he wished to feed them with the more glorious mysteries of the gospel. But these animosities of party spirit made it needful that he should confine himself to the giving them the milk, and not meat; for while thus agitated, their minds were not in a frame to receive it. But still notwithstanding these things, which from a body of sin which they all knew, and felt the influence of, they were thus exercised, and felt the infirmities of human nature; yet the weakest of them were babes in Christ; and consequently, not among the graceless and unawakened. And hence the reconciliation Paul had in view, meant the recovery of the Lord's family from backsliding, and all the other infirmities to

which the Lord's people are exposed in this evil world, in going home to their Father's house. And therefore it was the church and the church only, and not unregenerated sinners, for whom the apostle meant this blessed verse of scripture.

You have done me a kindness however (unintentional) in what you have brought forward in quotations from my Morning Portion. You have reminded me thereby of what I am so apt to forget. How merciful the Lord hath brought me on my way, and from one degree of knowledge to another. True, Sir, my early productions do not carry with them as strong proofs of information as my latter. But in my very latest I see enough to lament over and pray the Lord to pardon. However the portions you have selected do not militate, as you have conceived, against the truth; though they are not as high in point of doctrine, as if written now they would have been. But we are told, and I feel the blessedness of it, "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. vi. 18.)

I am come now to the consideration of that part of your pamphlet which you call 'Concluding Remarks on the spirit and tendency of Antinomianism.' What antinomianism had to do with the subject of our controversy, would be rather difficult for any one to say. However, whether irrelevant or not, you were determined to bring it in. And I rather think if the truth was known, it was the very object, and the only one, you had in view in sending forth your second publication.

But, Sir, if you will believe me, I am truly glad of it. Long have I wished to see the subject of antinomianism properly discussed and placed in its proper light. The name hath been too frequently used by men of your description as a bug-bear to frighten the Lord's

little ones. By confounding libertinism with antinomianism, and blending them together as one and the same, many godly persons have been distressed and shrunk from the imputation of it, as considering it the greatest obloquy.

I rejoice therefore that you have brought the subject forward. And I shall very cheerfully follow you through these several pages of your's now before me, as containing, I presume, the whole of your sentiments upon it. After offering my observations on your account of antinomianism, I shall take the freedom to state what according to the standard of holy scripture, constitutes the real character. And here, as in every other part of our controversy, the Lord will ultimately judge with whom the truth is.

In doing justice to this part of your work, I beg to premise, that you are perfectly unknown unto me unless by name. And by name only since your first publication. Your person, to my knowledge, I have never seen; so that if I really possessed the abilities of Lavater in physiognomy, I could not avail myself of them, upon the present occasion.

But, Sir, my deficiency here is more than compensated by what is contained in your own pamphlet. In the wrathful expressions with which you have marked every line, more or less, of this the concluding section, you have given (however undesignedly) the most complete index of your own mind. You have drawn, as you yourself tell us, after your own colouring, the portrait of an antinomian. So that in the performance of this service, it is impossible not to discover the rancour boiling in the breast of the artist. Correct or not correct, as the picture, when examined by men of cool judgment and reflection, may be; yet every beholder, but the painter himself, cannot fail to observe that he hath filled his brush with the bitterest gall.

That my opinion, however, may not be considered as the standard of decision on this occasion, I shall give the reader the account in your own words.

You begin with saying, 'It is a rare thing to meet with any, who will avow themselves antinomians. There are many however, between whose principles and the principles of antinomianism, there is so little dissimilarity, that it would puzzle the ablest mathematician to discern it. There are many too, who far from being strictly speaking antinomians, who yet approximate to their views, and partially adopt their system. There are others who are tinctured with these sentiments, but with a variety of shade.

'Were I required to give a definition of ancient and modern antinomianism in separate words, I should employ the following, I should speak of it as an AMALGAMA OF IRRELIGION, IGNORANCE, CONCEIT, PRIDE, OBSTINACY, SELFISHNESS, AND COWARDICE. It is moreover CLAMOROUS, MOROSE, SCORNFUL, INSOLENT, PETULENT, REVENGEFUL. It is the hot-bed of discord, and the most effectual promoter of religious feuds. It is a Diotrophes in the house of God, and a tyrant in the domestic circle. Where it attaches to dispositions naturally amiable, it converts them into bad ones; and it makes those that are naturally bad intolerable.'

'Further, antinomianism cramps the energies of the mind, and inculcates a narrow, selfish, and even cruel spirit. Some of its adherents have a notion among them, which is sometimes contended for in an exulting tone,—'that there are children in hell not a span long;' and not a few have been known to express themselves in the following manner respecting their unconverted relatives, 'that it is no use to be concerned about them: if they are the Lord's people he'll call them; and if not our wishes and prayers will do no good.' Such is the spirit of antinomianism; and the

suppression of it becomes the duty of all who have an opportunity in the least of doing so; for as this spirit prevails, all exertions for the best interest of our fellow creatures must diminish. Missionary and bible societies, and all schemes of public instruction, must be abandoned as awful infringements on the divine sovereignty.'

'In fine, the spirit of antinomianism is the most uncivilized, inhuman, cruel, unscriptural, and infernal of all spirits. A more hideous spirit never escaped from the bottomless pit. It is the prevailing antichrist of the present day,—the demon let loose for a season; and in application to whom the prayer of the following lines seems most suitable:—

> 'Almighty God, cut short his power;
> Let him in darkness dwell;
> And, that he vex the earth no more,
> Confine him down to hell.
>
> 'WATTS.

'And let all the people say, amen.'

Such is Mr. Bidlake's painting of the antinomian,—the features taken (as he himself tells us) from his own mind. For he saith,—were I required to give a definition of ancient or modern antinomianism, I should say so and so. And he hath done it with a vengeance. And I beg the reader to observe moreover, how soon, when having finished (according to what passed in his own mind) the complete character of the man, with his usual promptness in judgment, as by me, so by him he sits down without further trial to pass sentence, and lead forth to instant execution the victim of his wrath. He declares him to be 'a demon let loose from hell,' and therefore with his own arm, he sends him down to hell again;—calling in Dr. Watts to sing a dirge, 'prayerwise,' (as he calls it) at his funeral; and commanding all the people to say, amen.

Thus we have the full-length picture of the antinomian; his sentence, death, and final damnation; all

drawn by the Rev. Mr. James Bidlake, from sketches formed, as he tells us, in his own mind.

Truly, I stand amazed at what I have read! And but for the fact being before my eyes, no man alive could have convinced me that there rankled in any breast so much bitterness. What, Sir! are the whole body of antinomians, in one indiscriminate mass, thus meriting eternal damnation? Is there not one, no not one, for whom an exception might be made?

Moreover. Is Mr. Bidlake the only injured person by antinomianism, and that by thousands, who, like myself, have never seen him, and as many more who have never heard his name? And is there a cause that he of all men should pronounce his anathema, and with such unrelenting fury?

And is it Mr. Bidlake's province to issue death warrants, and wrest the government here also, as in my instance, from the hand of God? Supposing all he wishes to have supposed were true,—that all antinomians are a pest to society—yet if God permits them to live, will Mr. Bidlake say they ought to die? Is he not hereby guilty of a breach of the sixth commandment, and in the spirit of a murderer despising what God hath said: "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord!" Is this entering into the blessedness of these words; "therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink," &c. (Rom. xii. 19, 20.)

Is Mr. Bidlake's zeal for the Lord's cause so ardent, that he cannot wait the Lord's time for judgment, but at one blow would extirpate the whole race of antinomians; though thousands in the mass he knows nothing of, and who can never have injured him, would be involved in the general ruin?

Mr. Bidlake hath said, that '*some* of the adherents to antinomianism have a notion among them, which is sometimes contended for in an exulting tone, that there

are children in hell not a span long. And not a *few* have been known to express themselves as if it was of no use to be concerned for relatives: for if they are the Lord's people he will call them; and if not, our prayers and wishes will do no good.' If Mr. Bidlake was put upon oath, how *many* could he produce of the '*some* antinomians, whom he himself knows, and whom he himself hath heard say, in an exulting tone, rejoicing over the supposed children in hell not a span long? And how many more of the 'not a few which he himself hath heard express themselves as unconcerned for the eternal welfare of their unawakened relatives?'

It is an awful thing, when men take upon hearsay reports unfavourable to others; and afterwards act upon that hearsay as matters of *fact*. Before that Mr. B. or Dr. H. were born, no doubt such things have been reported as spoken by ungodly men. But who knows the truth of the things themselves? If Mr. Bidlake can produce instances of such characters from among *godly* men, let him do it. But I will venture to believe he cannot find one. And sure I am, that even among *ungodly* men, none ever triumphed more, in an exulting tone, over the supposed 'children in hell not a span long,' than he himself hath here done, in his rejoicing over the supposed damnation of all antinomians, whom he hath so charitably sent to the same place?

Truly (I cannot but repeat) I stand amazed at what I have read in this concluding section of Mr. Bidlake's pamphlet, and cannot but hope for the honour of common humanity, that there is not a parallel instance of such unprovoked malice to be found in the history of mankind, whether ancient or modern!

But, Sir, wherefore did you stop here? When you had finished your portrait of the antinomian, why did you not put Dr. Hawker's name at the bottom of the picture? It is true, indeed, few of your *discerning*

beholders of the piece needed such information. Every one of this description could not but conclude, that your painting was meant only as a copy of him, the original. Nevertheless, as all might not see your design, it is a pity you should have omitted it, as it would only have formed the proper *finale* to so masterly a performance.

I will not do an injury to your feelings, by supposing you suppressed it from any relentings of tenderness towards me. I would not do you this wrong. After the *title-page* of your *first* publication, nothing of the kind could be expected from you. And sure I am, there remains nothing for you to add to my character, in a way of crimination, which can have any bearings of malignity equal to the sentence which you have there pronounced upon me. Black as you have pourtrayed the features of the antinomian, in the comparative statement of crimes, the whole is but as one to a thousand, to that of the man whom you say to have 'SHEWN to be at variance in his gospel with the gospel of Christ and his apostles.'

Pardon me, Sir, if I add that after the perusal of this concluding section of your's, the first thought which arose in my mind was thankfulness to God in restraining men of your complexion by the laws. For it can require no further testimony than what you have here manifested, that if times of persecution were come (and come they must, according to the prophecies of the scripture, before that the slaughter of God's two witnesses can take place,) men of my description would soon feel the vengeance from men of your's. I should have to reek the consequence of having offended Mr. B. and his evangelical companions, by my little tract, though the title is in God's own words: 'the true Gospel, no Yea and Nay Gospel.' And if brought forth to answer for the faith, I should expect to see Mr. B. among the foremost of my opponents, crying out in

language not unsimilar to what took place in the instance of Paul: "Away with such a fellow from the earth! for it is not fit that he should live," Acts xxii. 22.

But, Sir, having paid so much attention to your picture of antinomianism, in beholding it through the inverted mirror in which you have held it up to view, it is but fair that I, in my turn, should be heard while I exhibit it through the true medium, namely, according to the scriptures of God.

The word antinomian is well known to be formed from a Greek compound, *anti-nomos;* the nearest literal translation of which, is, *against law.* And the meaning when applied to any person in relation to religion, is, that he who is an antinomian is looking for justification before God solely on the footing of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness; without an eye to the deeds of the law; yea, even against them.

This, in the scripture sense of the word, is the definition of a real antinomian. And I defy Mr. Bidlake, and the whole phalanx of his party, to annex any other meaning to the term antinomian upon strict grounds of truth. Mr. B. may indeed, (as others have done before him) attempt to confound and blend in one, *libertinism* and *antinomianism.* But if his conscience be awakened, he cannot but know, in the moment of doing it, that they are perfectly unconnected. True, there are many *libertines,* who, from an head-knowledge of the scriptures make a flaming profession, and would fain pass among the godly for the Lord's people. But what hath this to do with men of real godliness? There is not, perhaps, a society or communion of any one degree or order among men, but what hath to complain of being imposed upon by improper characters. It would form, however, sad logic in the schools, to argue from bad men's perversion of a thing, that the thing itself is evil. The apostle has decided this point in every instance where abuses of the doctrines of grace are made by

men of licentious principles. "Some affirm (saith Paul) that we say, let us do evil that good may come." But, saith the apostle of such, "Whose damnation is just," Rom. iii. 8. The true and genuine principles of antinomianism are as distinct from, and unconnected with, every species of libertinism or licentiousness, as light with darkness, truth with error, heaven with hell. And all the harsh names which Mr. B. in the wanton bitterness of his mind, hath thrown upon antinomians, no more belong to them than to Mr. Bidlake himself. Yea, I believe many a true antinomian would blush, could it be said of him, that he was capable of manifesting such 'scornful, insolent, petulent, and revengeful temper,' (to use some of Mr. B.'s own words) as he hath shewn in those pages.

Now, Sir, in opposition to all that you have said, or can say of the antinomian, I assert, and I will make it fully appear, by matter of fact, that every true antinomian is, and must be, by the very nature of his principles, A REGENERATED CHILD OF GOD! And thus I prove it.

The *true* antinomian, according to the etymology of the word, is looking for justification before God solely on the footing of Christ's righteousness. Unless, therefore, the Holy Ghost hath quickened him from the death of sin, made him a new creature in Christ Jesus, brought him into a feeling sense of the plague of his own heart, so that he loaths himself in his own sight, and is led by sovereign grace to behold Christ in all the beauties, glories, and infinite excellencies of his person, and the suitableness, fulness, and all-sufficiency of his redemption-work for the accomplishment of salvation; this man cannot be said, in opposition to the law, as a covenant of works, to be looking to, and living upon Christ, his blood and righteousness, as Jehovah's covenant of grace. And if he doth not so live and so

act, he hath not "the faith of God's elect," neither can he be called with truth an antinomian.

Hence, therefore, the criterion of character by which the true antinomian is known and proved, is when the gracious act of regeneration by God the Holy Ghost hath passed upon him. Is he born again? Is he passed from death to life? Is he stripped of every fancied goodness of his own? Is he living upon Christ and his righteousness? Hath he fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? Shew me the man that hath these tokens of grace, and you will shew me in him the true antinomian. All the professions in the world, void of these soul-renewing, soul-transforming qualities wrought by God the Holy Ghost, are nothing. To profess, or preach, that Christ came into the world to save sinners;—to believe with the head, that the obedience and death of Christ are effectual and all-sufficient to save sinners;—these may be taken up and put down, as circumstances may suit. Here is nothing of grace in all these things. "Devils," we are told, "believe and tremble." But to believe "to the saving of the soul," this is the sole work and gift of God; neither is it possessed by any but such as God the Holy Ghost, by regeneration, hath quickened into a new and spiritual life in Christ Jesus.

Holy men of old, in this sense, whether under the old testament dispensation, or under the new, were antinomians. They all lived, and died as they had lived, in faith. What faith? "The faith of God's elect." They sought justification by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. A point, said Luther, in his strong language, on which the church stands or falls. *Articulus stantis, vel cadentis ecclesiæ.* Had this not been the case, the Holy Ghost never would have given such honourable testimony, as he hath done, to that cloud of witnesses he hath recorded in his epistle to

the Hebrews, "of whom the world was not worthy." It may be to Mr. Bidlake a subject of astonishment, but not less certain for his ignorance of it, that Moses himself, who acted as the minister of God in the delivery of the law, sought no justification by the law; for if he had, it could not have been said of him, as the Holy Ghost hath said, "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them," Heb. xi. throughout.

And who in the latter ages of the church, in the gospel day, ever stood so high under the banner of antinomianism as the apostle Paul? Truly, if we give credit to what he saith of himself, he was the greatest antinomian that ever lived. The name given him, by way of opprobrium, was that of "the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," Acts xxvi. 5. But had he lived in our day, neither his apostleship nor the inspiration with which the Holy Ghost had endowed him, would have exempted him from the more reproachful name—the ringleader of the antinomians. Indeed he must have been an antinomian, and of the first magnitude. "I, through the law, (said he) am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," Gal. ii. 9, &c.

But was Paul a lawless man, and might such things be said of him as Mr. Bidlake hath said of all antinomians? Yes, verily! and with equal truth, as in many instances where he hath said it of God-fearing men, who, like Paul, are antinomians.

Hear what Paul saith for himself! "Though I

might (said he) also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh; I more. Circumcised the eighth day; of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin; an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless." Here, I presume, is a standard of law-works and law-deeds, that even Mr. Bidlake will hardly venture to consider inferior to his own. But what saith Paul? "What things (saith he) were gain to me, those I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 4—9.

But wherefore speak I of Paul? Blessed be God! true antinomians were not limited to his days. In the present awful hour, (awful as it is) God hath not left himself without witnesses in the earth. There are many (and not a few whom I personally know) who are God-fearing, Christ-honouring men, and in the true scriptural sense of the word, are antinomians. And concerning whom the Lord Jesus hath said in every age of his church, "they are the saints of the earth, and the excellent in whom is all my delight," Psalm xvi. 3.

Will Mr. Bidlake dare to annex to their names any of those reproachful epithets he hath so profusely lavished upon all antinomians? Let him at his peril. There is one looking on, who will sooner or later answer him. Jesus is more jealous of the least injury shewn his people, than what is done to himself. Matt. xii. 32. "Whoso shall offend one of those little ones that believe

in me"—and what a tremendous judgment follows! Mark ix. 42. In the mean time, the world may be challenged that in the neighbourhood where these true antinomians dwell, and as far as their influence extends, they are, in all the relative situations of life, as parents, husbands, children, brethren, servants, neighbours, "example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," 1 Tim. iv. 12. Their daily walk is a living comment upon that constellation of virtues the apostle mentions; "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," Phil. vi. 8, 9.

And can it be otherwise as long as the Lord is pleased to leave a witness for himself in the earth? For strictly and properly speaking, who are God's witnesses to the truth of the gospel?

Not any who are in a state of unrenewed nature, themselves dead in trespasses and sins, shut up under the law in unbelief, without God and without Christ in the world:—not those whose knowledge of God is nothing more than a hearsay knowledge, or a book-knowledge of God; who take things upon trust, and know them only by report;—such men, whether preachers or hearers, can be no witnesses for God. Not those whose belief is not found in God's gift, but in man's creating; living between natural hope and natural fear; sometimes trusting, as they think, to the general mercies of God in Christ, but more frequently fearing that they shall come short of the grace of God.

None of these, and the like characters, can be true witnesses for God; for they cannot witness to a single work of God wrought upon their own souls, and how shall they speak of it to others. No man can be a witness for God, that there is peace in the blood of the

cross, whose conscience hath not felt that peace applied by the Holy Ghost. For as in the common circumstances of life, it is impossible for any man to bear testimony to what he doth not know; so in the great concerns of the soul, no man can certify to the truth of God's salvation, before that he himself hath been made a partaker of that salvation.

It is, indeed, very possible, yea, more than possible, (and to be feared in the present hour, too common a thing in life) that carnal men by reading and study, hearing sermons, or the like, may have very clear notions of the great truths of the gospel; yea, and may preach them too, with much seeming clearness to others. But head-knowledge and heart-influence, are two very different things. A man may have a lively idea of the sun from a beautiful representation of him in painting; but no painter can describe his warmth or light. These must be felt, before the principles of the bright luminary of the day are known. In like manner, all the great and distinguishing doctrines of faith must be known in the soul by the operations of the Holy Ghost, or a man can bear no testimony to their truth and reality.

Ask a poor sinner, whom God the Spirit hath regenerated, what is the passing from death to life, and from dead works to serve the living God? Let that man speak, (for he alone can witness) who hath felt the plague of his own heart; what it is, when from the condemning sentence of a broken law, self-loathing, and self-abhorring, he hath been led to Christ by the Holy Ghost for pardon and salvation, and found redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Let all such say, and testify to others, (for they are able) how effectually the blood of Christ is to cleanse from sin, for it hath cleansed them from all sin. They may, indeed, bear testimony, that the righteousness of Christ justifieth

freely, fully, everlastingly, when they are the objects of such sovereign grace; and are justified before God in the garments of Christ's salvation. Such men, whether preachers or hearers, may truly say, in the language of one of old; "Come hither and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," Ps. lxvi. 16.

And such are all true antinomians, who from being regenerated and called with an holy calling, can, and do bear witness to the truth of God's grace, from the Lord's having wrought a work of grace in their own souls. And amidst all the opposition of men or devils, they can join issue with the apostle on the same firm testimony as he did, when he said; "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 1—4.

Such, Sir, is the true antinomian, when beheld through the unerring mirror of the word of God. A contrast, indeed, to the disgusting representation you have made of him in your own. In due time the Lord will make it appear with whom the truth is.

I cannot take my leave of you without first assuming the freedom, through the channel of this letter, of saying a word to any and every true antinomian, into whose hands, peradventure, this correspondence of our's may fall. I shall be very brief however. It is only to beg all such real followers of the Lord, to whose spirits the Holy Ghost bears witness that they are born of God; that while the Lord thus graciously witnesseth to them, they will openly and cheerfully bear their witness for God. No longer shrink from the charge of

antinomianism, because men who know not the Lord use it as a term of reproach to the Lord's people. While the Lord keeps you, according to his promise from falling, their attempting to blend libertinism with antinomianism will be to their own confusion. And to be an antinomian upon true gospel principles, is a badge of peculiar honour in the present awful day of rebuke and blashphemy.

You would not relinquish or conceal your faith in that first and most blessed of all divine truths, the everlasting love of God the Father to the church in Christ, in his electing, predestinating grace; because there are some, who from the blindness of their hearts, deny God's sovereignty, and arraign his wisdom in the choice of his people. Neither would you for a moment forego the blessedness you enjoy in the contemplation of the glories of Christ's person, his oneness with the Father, and the completeness of his finished salvation, because there are some who, though calling themselves christians, deny his Godhead, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. Neither would you listen for a moment to the heresy of those who daringly refuse their belief to the person, Godhead, and ministry of the Holy Ghost, while you are living under the full enjoyment in those blessed acts of his, whereby he is daily manifesting himself in all. And wherefore then should you regard the obloquy thrown on you by men, who know not the plague of their own heart, nor the blessedness of a free and full justification before God in Jesus Christ, in calling you an antinomian, and charging you with what you abhor more than they—licentiousness! Oh! never shrink from such men. While, through the Lord's grace, you are living to the Lord's glory, and adorning the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things; let the outcry of such men be to you as the noise of a distant multitude, in whose clamour you have no concern. That

one sweet scripture, (and there are numbers beside to the same amount,) is enough to sooth the soul under all their outrage. "Hearken unto me ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation," (Isa. li. 7, 8.)

And now, Sir, for the present I take my leave of you; our cause will have a hearing in due season, and the Lord will judge between me and you.

In the mean time you have my full consent, (as far as my power extends to grant it,) to call me antinomian, and write it too on my forehead; yea, if your conscience will allow you, you may add to it all the harsh epithets you have given of antinomianism, and add as many more as your fancy can suggest. Blessed be God! I have more than consolation enough to bear me up under all. In relation to God I can truly say with Paul, "therefore being justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also I have access by faith into this grace wherein I stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," (Rom. v. 1, 2.) And in relation to man, the kindness, favour, and affection of all with whom I am acquainted, and especially in the town and parish where I have spent more than half a century, are ample balance to all the abuse thrown upon me by persons of your complexion. It is, indeed, a very high gratification, and I feel the blessedness of it, amidst all the circumstances of a life of so little consequence as mine; I can with the apostle say, and with equal truth and confidence, while ascribing it to the same source as he did: "herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men," (Acts xxiv. 16.)

And while the Lord speaks peace, it matters not who declares war;—while he is near, who justifieth me, I care not who condemns me. Ere long Jesus will appear for the salvation of his people. Blessedly will that scripture be fulfilled to every redeemed child of God: "he will stand at the right hand of the poor to save his soul from unrighteous judges," (Psm. cix. 31.)

A

LETTER OF THANKS

TO THE

REV. THOMAS SMITH,

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE: AND MASTER OF GORDON-HOUSE ACADEMY, KENTISH-TOWN.

IN ANSWER TO HIS PAMPHLET, ENTITLED, 'MORE WORK FOR DR. HAWKER.'

A LETTER OF THANKS,

&c. &c.

SIR,

YOU have done me a great favour, however unintentional, in the pamphlet which you have addressed to me through the medium of the press, and which in the frivolity of your mind you have entitled, 'More Work for Dr. Hawker.' And I have lost no time after the receipt of it, but as became me, have taken the earliest moment of making all due acknowledgments for the same.

If I presage aright, you will derive all you wish from this service of your's, in emolument and fame, among that great mass of the community for whom your pamphlet is more particularly designed, and with whose views in religion your own are so congenial. Sure I am the world will thank you; since nothing can be more soothing and consolatory to every carnal man's creed, than the doctrine of *free will.* And to be told by a reverend divine of the nineteenth century, that all mankind are alike salvable, must be a grateful cordial to wash away the remembrance of that gravelling truth of the Lord Jesus, "many are called, but few are chosen," (Matt. xxii. 14.)

And while you 'bear your blushing honours thick upon you,' allow me, Sir, to offer no less my thanks also, (though on a different ground,) for this your labour of love. To be noticed only, (if it be but noticed,) in a way of reproof, much more to be ill spoken of, by

men of your complexion, are distinctions of which I cannot but feel proud, and of which no true servant of the Lord Jesus ought to be insensible.

I cannot indeed tell you, how much I am pleased that my little tract, on the 'True Gospel,' hath called forth so many animadversions from the flimsy professors of religion in the present day. It is a well-known maxim in the materia medica, that those medicines which are best suited for the cure of peccant humours, search, while they operate. And by a parity of reasoning, if we may form judgment of spiritual things by the same standard, this little work of mine promiseth, under the Lord's blessing, to do much good. I have heard from some quarters, that many of the Lord's chosen ones have already been refreshed by it. And of all the recompence to labour, this is the highest and the best. I find, also, that not a few like yourself, are bitterly griped with the unpalatable truths contained in it. And at this account I rejoice; yea, and I will rejoice. All these things, therefore, are well, and just as they should be.

You have unhappily chosen a title for your pamphlet, which hath little or no correspondence with the body of the work. And it reminds me of the sermons of some of our modern preachers, whose discourses have no further connexion with the text than the being placed in the front of them. 'More Work for Dr. Hawker,' should certainly have been followed up with some outlines, at least, of what kind that work was to be. But you are a school-master it seems. And in my instance, you lose not sight of the pedagogue even out of school. I feel somewhat of the church's trial in Egypt, when called upon to make 'brick without straw.' Your whole pamphlet affords nothing to work upon, but to answer again what hath been already made threadbare, in answering, namely,—a few passages from scripture, which, detached from their context, seem to

favour the free-will cause; but when beheld in their full connexions, act the reverse, and most amply strengthen the "faith once delivered unto the saints." So that, in fact, though your pamphlet is ushered into the world in the most imperative and dictatorial spirit, 'More Work for Dr. Hawker,' you have chalked out for me nothing to do, but to remark through every page, the confidence with which you decide, and the incompetency with which you reason.

Yes, indeed, I must correct myself. There is one point in which you excel, namely, abuse. And if ungenerous, uncandid, and unjust accusations merit notice, there are enough of these in your pamphlet to excite attention.* But to these I make no answer. Such things are wholly irrelevant to the truth of God; and, therefore, into this department I shall not enter. My cause is too good, and too well established by the scriptures of God, to render it necessary to descend to such miserable expedients. The master of Gordon-house academy shall retain, as long as it is congenial to his feelings so to do, this province alone: I shall not envy him. When the Lord shall have taught him better, he will think better of it, and learn the truth of that

* That the reader may judge for himself the correctness of this observation, I have taken the pains to select a few of Mr. Smith's accusations from the body of his pamphlet, and in his own words, leaving them to the reader's own judgment, without a comment. Page 6; speaking of me, he saith, 'That as an advocate for the truth as it is in Jesus, you would not willingly retire, (after forty years labour,) with a lie in your right hand.' Page 7; he saith, 'I should not despair of convincing you of the falsity of your assertion, had you not unhappily learned the art of equivocating and shuffling, when a direct answer is required; and, also, that of wresting the scriptures, and causing them to speak whatever your fanciful mind dictates.' Page 16; 'You have confessed that your judgment is imperfect, for you see, even in your very latest publications, enough to lament over, and pray the Lord to pardon. Certainly you do not imagine that your confession will obtain credit. Indeed it is a feigned humility, mixed with pride.' Page 17; 'You hint that you are the only minister that preaches the true gospel.' Ibid; 'Are not you the person who rejects the Lord of life and glory?' Page 18; 'You profess not to be acquainted with any gentlemen who preach the gospel.' Page 20; 'I think, Sir, you have made confession that you have changed your creed,' &c. &c.

sweet scripture: "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," (James i. 20.) Here again, therefore, my reprover and myself are at issue. All this is well; yea, very well. And I am pleased that such things are as they are.

You have stumbled no less at the threshold of your pamphlet, in supposing that when I sent forth my little tract on the 'True Gospel,' to the church of Christ, I meant the church of England. Indeed, indeed, I did not. And had you been so well acquainted as you ought, with the doctrines and principles of that church of which you profess to be her minister, you would have known better. For the church of England herself hath defined what is meant by the church of God, when saying, 'the church of God is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered.' This is her own decision of the true church. Of consequence, therefore, in her view, nothing constitutes the church of God but a congregation of the faithful. Where these are, there the church is; whether in the establishment or out of it. And where these are not, there can be no church of God, be the assembly known among men by whatever name they may. It was therefore, to the congregation of faithful men, thus known, I sent my little tract: with every other it had no connexion.

When you have corrected this error of your's, you will do well to get rid of another. The sad mistake which you, and all the advocates of free-will like yourself fall into, is, the being ignorant, (whether wilfully or unintentionally I will not say,) that the scriptures of God are for the use of the people of God, and them only. And had you power to contend this point, or could you produce a single proof to the contrary from scripture, you would in that case find 'More Work for Dr. Hawker,' than he or any man alive could perform for the confirmation of free grace. But,

blessed be God, this I know, and have long known, is impossible to be done. And whether you are pleased or displeased, I dare not refrain from telling you, that if ever the Lord be your teacher, sooner or later, as seemeth good to his infinite wisdom, he will lead you to the discovery, that those very scriptures which you now behold, as justifying the indiscriminate offers of salvation, do altogether militate against them.

In proof of what I say, if you would coolly and dispassionately examine the subject, in the instance of Peter's sermon on the day of pentecost, which you have brought forward, as the first of all your arguments in support of your opinion, and on which you lay so much stress; and if you would consider it in all its bearings and connexions, you would discover, that its plain and obvious meaning is the very reverse of what you suppose; and your candour, if you would admit it, would lead you to confess the truth, and cause the weapons of warfare on this subject to fall out of your hands.

Look, then, at the whole of Peter's discourse on that memorable day. Hear how continually, through all the parts of it, he dwells upon the pleasing name of Israel. "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem," Acts ii. 14. Strangers which came up to trade at Jerusalem on this jewish festival, could not be called dwellers. So again ver. 22, and 36. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words," &c. "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly," &c. Add to these addresses personally to Israel; observe Peter referring for the truth of what he said to the Jewish prophets Joel and David, verses 16, &c. and 25, &c. Had the apostle included strangers in his sermon, there would have been no appeal necessary to the prophecies of the Jews. In fact, strangers could not have understood them. Connect with these striking particularities

the recollection that Peter was himself a Jew, and bolstered up in all the national prejudices of that people, in confining salvation whenever the Lord should send it, to themselves only. Go further, and call to mind that years after this transaction at pentecost, when the Lord the Spirit was pleased to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles, in the instance of Cornelius, and Peter was to go to Cæsarea to preach it; the mind of the apostle revolted at the idea, and the Lord wrought a miracle to overrule his narrow notions, Acts x. 9—20. Nay, even after this, and when he went, yet he manifested such reluctance to hold intercourse with the honest centurion, that he prefaced his visit by saying, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation," Acts x. 28. Now let me ask, is it possible that any one can think, who reads these accounts of Peter's aversion to the other nations of the earth, and which continued with unabating ardour for years after the descent of the Holy Ghost at pentecost, could be so much alive to the idea of universal salvation on that day as to offer it indiscriminately to all? Could he that thought it unlawful *then*, when at Cornelius's house, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation, have been so partial to all the world *years before*, and when speaking personally to the Jews, be supposed including all other people? It requires surely a greater degree of credulity than most men possess, to give into such an opinion, and to reconcile things which are in themselves so opposite.

Moreover. We have other collateral circumstances which come in by way of proof, that this sermon of Peter could have no such meaning, as indiscriminate offers of salvation. It is time to inquire what were the sentiments of the other apostles on this point; for they, as well as he, notwithstanding Peter appears to have

been the chief speaker on that great day, were all under the same divine unction, and all standing forth alike with Peter, to take part in the ministry of the same word. Now concerning them it is only necessary to read what passed in consequence of Peter's visit to Cornelius, to discover that they were all to a man as deeply entrenched as he was, in the bigoted notions of the Jews, concerning a limited salvation to the people of Israel only. For thus we read: "And the apostles and brethren which were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, thou wentest into men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Here surely is a very plain proof that Peter's sermon, on the day of pentecost, could not have held out offers of salvation to all the world, since nothing is said of it, as though his brethren, the apostles, took offence at it then, though so highly offended, that he should simply visit the Gentiles, and eat with them now. But when Peter had related to them the whole history of Cornelius, and made his apology for what he had done, in these words: "what was I that I could withstand God?" Then we are told, and not before, "when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying; then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," (Acts xi. 1—18.) And in addition to all these unanswerable arguments, we are further told, that after the murder of Stephen, when in consequence of the persecution which arose on that account, they that were scattered abroad travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word, "they preached to none but unto the Jews only." If any man after these stubborn facts, attested as they are by the word of God, will, for the sake of an opinion, contend that the preaching of Peter on the

day of pentecost, was an indiscriminate offer of salvation to all the world, let him say I do so; for I would not step beyond the threshold of my house to convince him of his folly.

And after the statement of these things, will it be asked, what Peter meant when he said, "repent ye and be baptized?" &c. The answer is at hand; yea, the very words themselves explain themselves: "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," (Acts ii. 38, 39.) And what promise was this; but the promise God made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. Peter, it is plain, knew of no other, for so he himself said in a subsequent sermon, when in consequence of healing a cripple at the gate of the temple, and the multitude gathered to see it: Peter, as before, addressed the Jews, and them only. Read it as it stands; Acts iii. 12. "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us?" &c. Still harping on the same string, Israel, &c. And after a very precious sermon, which immediately followed, in his call to the children of Abraham, he summed up the whole in these words: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying, unto Abraham and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, that you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities," (Acts iii. 25, 26.) Nothing surely upon earth can be more palpable as a fact, that the whole of Peter's exhortation was to Israel, as the children of the covenant. He had not then the most distant idea, that "God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," (Acts xi. 18.)

Hence Peter said, the promise is unto "you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off;" your children's children, and multitudes yet unborn, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Yes! Peter was well taught, that God's call, and not man's invitation, became the grand cause to bring sinners unto Christ: as many even of the children of Israel as God should call, and no more. For Peter knew, as well as Paul, that all are "not Israel that are of Israel." The nation of Israel, as a nation, was one thing: the children of God in his true Israel, as his people, another,) Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8.) And hence, just before Peter's death, when sending to the church his last epistle, he bids them that had obtained like precious faith with the apostles, "to give all diligence in making their calling and election sure," (2 Peter i. 1—10.) For if they proved their calling by the blessed fruits of the Spirit, their election was certainly included. Calling being the effect, and election the cause.

I have been the more particular on this interesting subject, and have not knowingly omitted one argument upon the occasion, that the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, may appear. And however you may charge me with 'shuffling and wresting the scriptures, to cause them to speak (as you are pleased to say) whatever my fanciful mind dictates:' these things will remain for you to prove, and the Lord will be judge between us, and will shew with whom the truth is; and here I leave it. I think it unnecessary to add more in relation to two or three other scriptures, which you have dragged in to support your own opinion of indiscriminate offers of salvation. The passage from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, v. 14. and that in the prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. xviii. 32. are both addressed to the people of God, and to them *only*. The former is expressly said to be "to the saints which are at

Ephesus," chap. i. 1. and the latter in so many words, "speak to Israel, O house of Israel!" But on this subject I add no more. If the plain unvarnished statement of facts from scripture, concerning Peter's sermon, fail to carry conviction to the mind, what our Lord hath said in the parable may be equally said here; "neither will men be persuaded, though one rose from the dead," (Luke xvi. 31.)

You might have spared yourself the trouble of giving in your confession of faith before me; for what have I to do with your faith? This cannot be among the 'More Work for Dr. Hawker.' Your creed, however, is a curious one. You say that 'man's salvation is of God; but his damnation is of himself, for he has no one to blame. God called; but he refused.' So then according to this standard God wills, but man saith, nay: and what God wills he cannot accomplish; for the grace of God becomes subject to the will of man. Admirable system of theology! in which man is omnipotent; and the good pleasure of God left at a peradventure. What a mercy it is for the Lord's chosen ones, that their safety depends not upon such an uncertainty. "Nevertheless (saith the Lord, by Paul) the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," (2 Tim. ii. 19.) And a single promise from the charter of grace throws at once to the ground the whole Babel-building of such free-will thinkers. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," (Psalm cx. 3.)

I am at a loss to form any well-grounded conjecture, what motives prompted you to fill, in nearly two pages out of eighteen (for after deducting title-page and blanks your whole shilling pamphlet is no more) with the names of gentlemen of whom you say 'they are not ashamed to declare all the counsel of God.' Truly I rejoice if it be so, and under this hope that it is, I

sincerely pray the Lord to increase their number. But this information affords no work, much less 'More Work for Dr. Hawker.' But you have your motives no doubt, though I have not sufficient clearness of judgment to discern them. However I would not overlook your kindness (if your giving me their names be meant in kindness to me, and without an eye to any profit to yourself) in my letter of thanks: and of those gentlemen, and every other of the kind, the highest respect I can pay them, is to borrow the words of the apostle, and say of them: I desire to be "followers of them as far as they follow Christ," (1 Cor. xi. 1.)

And now, Sir, having in vain looked over your pamphlet from beginning to end, to find somewhat corresponding to your title-page, which might open to me employment; I was just on the point of giving it up as a lost pursuit, not being able to find any thing to do, when on turning my eye to the advertisement on the cover, where you have published the prospectus of your plan of education at Gordon-house Academy, to my great astonishment, among other sugary promises of good, I glimpsed at these two lines: '*Drawing, music, &c. on the usual terms.—N. B. Serious young men prepared for holy orders.*'

Surely (said I) Mr. Smith could not mean to find me employment here? No. I give him the credit that he never once meant it; but in truth here is 'More Work for Dr. Hawker' than Dr. Hawker likes. It is no province of mine to undertake cleansing the augean stable. Nevertheless as my employer hath proposed so much labour for me, and produced none, I must find some for myself.

Your academy, Sir, must be a very extensive one, and yet comprehensive. What! I suppose, the drawing, music, and the *et cætera's* are intended by way of giving a finishing to a polite education. Your gay

youth of both sexes are prepared to move in the genteel departments of life; and your serious young men will be taught to be more grave. Admirable! So then your academy will be a nursery for the trainment of young plants, formed for both worlds. God and mammon! God and mammon! reverend Sir, what an obligation the present generation are under to you!

I know not how it is, but so it is, there is no accounting for the concatenation of ideas. I no sooner glanced those lines of your's, but the words of Job crossed my mind: "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ," Job xxi. 11, 12. And I remember Mr. Flavel, in one of his sermons, when quoting this passage, saith, 'that this is all the catechism which they teach them.' But as a minister of the church of England, I cannot think so of *you*. No doubt but on Sundays at least, the children of your school go through their catechism, and are expert in that question, and the answer to it—'What did your god-fathers and god-mothers do for you?' 'They did promise and vow three things in my name. *First*, that I should forsake the devil and all his works; the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. *Secondly*, that I should believe all the articles of the christian faith. And *thirdly*, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.' Really, Sir, to be less jocular, (though provoked to it by your amphibious conduct) for the subject is too serious to be considered lightly, I am astonished at your effrontery. Is it possible that my reprover can openly call himself a minister of the church of England, and put his name to a bill where such things are blended?

I have read, and do read, and with much concern,

that the present day is a day in which men are aiming to make things, which are opposite in their nature to each other, to amalgamate: but it was left until I read your pamphlet and advertisement, to know that a minister of the establishment was at the head of such a seminary.

'Serious young men prepared for holy orders.' Sir, I have been taught to believe, and always formed conclusions in that belief, that "the preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1. I know not what preparation *you* propose for serious young men on this ground; but if I may judge from the sample you have given of your acquirements in theology, I do not hope great things; and I cannot hesitate to tell you that it is in my apprehension an awful thing, and among the portentous signs of the present day, this parson-preparing and parson-making business which is going on. Very much I fear that what the Lord said in the days of the prophet, hath no less an allusion to the present hour: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied," Jer. xxiii. 21.

I cannot, indeed I dare not, bid you God speed; and the reason is obvious. But I do hope, yea, I know it, the great Head of his church and people will keep his chosen ones from being brought under the ministry of such by-men-made parsons.

I am not so sanguine as you are, to suppose that I can effect any thing to induce a change in your mind, from my observations. You say: 'I should not despair of convincing *you* of the falsity of your assertions, had you not learned the art of equivocating and shuffling.' But really, Sir, I do despair of working the least good upon *your* mind, though you are not learned in the art of equivocating and shuffling. For the fact is, the world is on your side, and the tide from thence runs strong. *Rem si posses, &c.* is an adage you well

know, and against which all human reasoning loses its force.

You must forgive me if I incur your displeasure; but really and truly, Sir, I shall not be able, from the force of imagination, as often as I think of 'Gordon House Academy,' but to connect with it the idea, that while the *young folks of gaiety* are tripping it to the fiddle and the flute, in one part of your dwelling, the *serious young men* are sitting down at the feet of the reverend master of the house, and by him preparing for holy orders!

AN APPEAL

TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:

WITH

A PARTICULAR ADDRESS TO THE ORTHODOX DISSENTERS,
AND TO THE CLERGY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

AN APPEAL,

&c. &c.

THE French revolution, and the events involved in it, have awakened the attention of all Europe. It is impossible indeed, but that an object of such magnitude should excite universal regard. So vast an empire as France, whose importance in the rank of kingdoms, and whose general operations, have for the most part, uniformly regulated the systems of other European powers for many centuries past, in their dispositions to peace or war; could not have been thrown into such mighty convulsions without proportionably agitating neighbouring states. As it might well be expected, therefore, the surrounding nations have felt the concussion, and been necessarily alarmed by the shock. And while the attention of *public bodies* hath been excited to watch its progress, with sedulous care and anxiety; *individuals* no less from their private and personal interest, have been compelled to regard it with suitable apprehensions and concern. And however differently it may have appeared, according to the different mediums through which it hath been viewed; all have concurred in this one opinion concerning it, that it is pregnant with the most interesting consequences, both to persons and to society.

In the first paroxysms of disorder which the revolution occasioned, the subject was too vast and complicated to be brought under any accurate decision what the termination might be. The friends of it indeed

were very confident of its eventual happy consequences. And it was at one time pretty much the custom in this country, among a certain class of people, to speak of it in the highest terms of panegyric. France, it was said, would now ascend the summit of glory, and the day was approaching, when from the plenitude of power she would possess, she might give laws to all Europe. Thes were among the eulogies trumpeted from every mouth, and echoing from all quarters. But though the short interval of three years hath hardly elapsed since the commencement of the revolution, so fickle and precarious is the voice of praise, that I should think it impossible to find a single person even among its warmest partisans, hardy enough to avow, that events have in any manner corresponded to his expectation, or that the circumstances have turned out just as he could have wished, Though the revolution for the time blazed like a meteor, and dazzled the eyes of the admiring multitude, yet its glittering was but momentary, and soon died away. And the consequence indeed which followed, hath been found not unsimilar to the effects which the fiery exhalations raised from the earth by heat frequently induce. Inviting by a false light, the incautious traveller from the highway of safety, into pathless tracks, which the imagination forms to his mistaken view; at length when the vapour disappears, the deluded wanderer is left, amidst all the horrors of darkness, and the innumerable dangers with which he is surrounded, to mourn over his infatuation, and to regret the folly of his pursuit. Such is the very melancholy situation at present of the people of France! What numberless instances no doubt might be found there, could their history be brought forward to public view, to exemplify the fact! How infinite the sorrows, and the heart-aches, which the revolution hath introduced, amidst the various circles of private life! How has the ardour of enthusiasm, in the mad pursuit

of fancied freedom, been followed with the loss of all real liberty! And how have we seen some of the most clamorous in their shouts of *vive la revolution!* almost the moment of their transports become martyrs to the *guillotine.*

But notwithstanding these effects are so palpably induced by the change of government in France; notwithstanding that change hath proved the very reverse of what it proudly promised; and hath already been productive of such serious evils in every department of the kingdom, that perhaps not an individual in it, whom if he dared to acknowledge the real sentiments of his heart, but would confess, that it was his most earnest wishes the revolution had never taken place: it is a fact, which cannot be dissembled with truth, nor owned but with pain, there are not wanting persons in this land of freedom and happiness, who would be glad to make the same mad experiment of subverting our most excellent constitution; and are secretly cherishing the hope, that a similar commotion may shortly be induced among us. That the unprincipled and licentious, men of desperate fortunes, and no characters, should wish to introduce uproar and anarchy into a state, that in the common scramble they, who had nothing to lose, might gather from their neighbour's property, cannot be an object of surprise. But that persons of integrity and honour, who ought to be above the influence of vulgar prejudices, should really countenance a measure which no feeling mind can contemplate but with horror, and especially with the recent example now before our eyes, of the miseries of the French nation induced by it, which for greatness beggars all description; I say, that any friend to maukind could wish such an event to take place, and secretly put forth an helping hand to promote it, this is at once as unaccountable, as it is contradictory to all virtuousness of principle, and can only be referred into an apprehen-

sion, either that the minds of such persons are not thoroughly aware of the moral turpitude of the action, or it must be considered as an additional evidence what strong contrarieties of disposition are blended in the same breast, and how many strange inconsistencies are frequently found uniting to make up the human character. Presuming, however, that with minds of the former description, the matter needs only to be coolly and candidly considered, to induce better sentiments; I have ventured to make an appeal to the people of England upon the subject, and am led to hope, from the well known good sense and generosity of my countrymen, that whatever the event of my application may be, if I am not happy enough to convince by the strength of argument, I shall not displease by the mode of reasoning. If I know myself, my motives are too pure to give disgust, and my endeavours too humble to offend. The sole object which I have in view, is by a few plain observations on the principles of the French revolution, as it now appears, to demonstrate from facts and experience the fallacy of the doctrine, in order to deter the minds of my countrymen from the imitation of an example so fatal. The present moment must be considered as peculiarly favourable to this purpose. An earlier appeal could not have been made with the advantages which we now possess. An interval of several years, since the onset of the commotion, has now afforded ample space for fair trial, and in that trial sufficient evidence of truths appear to enable the mind to form a clear and decisive calculation of the whole. We stand now therefore, as upon a rising ground, in the field of observation. We speak from real matters of fact, and draw our conclusions from somewhat more than mere conjecture or probability. So that judging by events, (which must be allowed upon all occasions to be the truest standard of decision, when attainable) the experiment which France has made, in the doctrine

of revolutions, holds forth an admirable lesson to every other nation, and it should seem to be but the common policy of an enlightened people to profit by it.

It being impossible to trace the smallest affinity in the English form of government to the French constitution, as it stood, antecedent to the present disturbances; nothing could be more absurd than to transfer the doctrine of a revolution in France, (supposing that revolution justifiable,) to this country. No two nations perhaps upon earth, of any refinement, could be more dissimilar in their characteristical features: in religion, in polity, in laws, in the genius of the people, in their manners and customs; in short, in almost every point of view by which man is diversified, in the local situations of countries. There is hardly any thing more foreign, or more opposed to each other, than are the general traits of character which distinguish the French from the English people. Can there be any possible resemblance between despotism and freedom; between the absolute power of the prince and a limited monarchy; between the folly of popery and the wisdom of protestantism? And yet these things must be all proved to be perfectly analogous, before the change of government which has taken place in France, can be brought as a proper reason or precedent, to justify the expediency of similar measures being adopted in this country.

Nay, the very argument which ascribes wisdom in the one instance, demonstrates at the same time the folly of it when applied to the other. And it is difficult to conceive any higher compliment of an indirect nature could be paid to the freedom of a state, than was shewn to our's, in the avowed purposes of the revolution to enjoy the same privileges. The very first arm which was lifted for the destruction of the Bastile, no less displayed thereby the happiness of that country where no Bastile stands: where no prison is found to confine

the most worthless of its subjects unheard; but where the person of the peasant is as much secured from the hand of lawless violence, as the person of the prince: and where no man can be deprived either of life or liberty, but from the clearest conviction of his crimes, and under the fairest and fullest trial of an impartial jury. As these are truths notoriously known, and which no one of common candour can deny, it is surely unaccountable, that the propriety of a change in the government in this country, should be contended for by a parity of reasoning from the French nation: and I cannot but think that the idea must have originated in some latent principles of the mind, and not of the most amiable nature. I would beg to ask such persons whether they conceive, that the French people would have wished for a new modification of their government had that government been such as our's now is? And whether their dissatisfaction under their constitution, was not become the more intolerant, from contrasting it with the freedom which they perceived Englishmen enjoyed? Nay, I would further demand, is it not an undoubted truth, that the first pretences made for the subversion of the French laws, and the demand for a new constitution, was on the ground that a system of government might be formed on the model of the English legislation? And can it be the doubt of the moment, with any candid mind, that supposing the most violent of the members in the national convention, had been presented with a *carte blanche*, in the first outrage of the revolution, to sketch the plan of government he wished for himself and his countrymen; but that he would immediately have directed his thoughts to this happy country, and have drawn the outlines of that beautiful and unequalled form which we now enjoy? How could he indeed have rejoiced to have seen settled upon a firm basis, without bloodshed and without clamour, that very form, which some who know not why, are so exceedingly

dissatisfied with; and others, insensible of its value, are desirous to exchange for what the uncertainty of a revolution shall chance to give in its place! And can it be possible then, in the face of such plain and palpable facts, that the desire of a revolution in this kingdom, could result from pure and disinterested motives? Could any man, indeed, possessed of the lowest degree of social affection to the body politic, rejoice in the prospect of the whole system being convulsed, by a seizure so deadly, which must necessarily induce a paralysis in all its members?

Though I cannot but be led to hope that the miseries universally sustained by the French nation, in consequence of the revolution, have tended very much to open the eyes of my countrymen; and I am verily persuaded that the number of those who were at one time eager to make a similar experiment in this country, are now considerably lessened among us; yet, in order if possible, to do away every remaining impression in favour of a doctrine founded in the maddest policy, I could wish to enter yet further into the subject, and meet the argument in every point of view.

There was a time, when comparative observations of the happiness of this country with other kingdoms, were sure to awaken a warmth of approbation in the mind: and the heart could not be led into a train of reflections, on our advantages both civil and religious, without instinctively being lifted into gratitude to the great Author of such distinguished mercies. But I know not how it is, such topics have of late lost their relish among us. The appetite is changed; and since the *mania* of the French hath raged with such violence, many of my countrymen have caught the infection, and the disorder hath shewn itself by corresponding symptoms. So very much indeed hath been the fashion of reprobating the notion of our happiness as a people, that were I to offer the plainest food of this kind, it

would occasion a nausea with many, and they would turn from it with disgust.

There is a perversity in nature, sometimes opposing the most salutary means, which would otherwise operate to its advantage; and which in order to correct, it becomes necessary frequently to gratify the wayward humour, by apparently consenting for the moment to what we know to be wrong, in order more effectually to bring about what we know to be right. Somewhat like this it may be necessary to observe in the present instance. I will suppose, therefore, for argument's sake, all that the most dissatisfied mind shall wish to have supposed, unfavourable to our present form of government. Let it be said that abuses and errors have crept into it. I will not stay to demand what those abuses and errors are; where they exist; nor in what part particularly it is, that the legislature requires a new modification. I will for once take every thing for granted which is complained of, and shall admit what perhaps would require no small difficulty to substantiate, in many instances by proof if demanded. But after every concession of this kind which can be made, still I must contend, and with all the warmth and earnestness the importance of the subject renders necessary, that the idea of accomplishing a change, beneficial in its consequences, either to persons or society, by violence and clamour; is contrary to all principles of sound reason and good sense. And happily for my argument, it ceases to be any longer the mere doctrine of theory. It has been brought into complete practice in that wretched country, by whom the experiment has been made; and the event hath afforded the most irrefragable and decided proofs, how incompetent it is, in the midst of anarchy and disorder, to settle principles of right and wrong. France stands forth a most awful monument in history, to shew the fallacy of such attempts. And in her example it requires but little discernment

to discover that all causes, however right or well-founded they may be in themselves, cannot but suffer when the management of them is surrendered into the hands of self-created authority. And if in a country like France, where the great mass of the people were all as one in seeking redress, as they had been one in suffering, such events have followed a revolution; what may be expected in this land of freedom from the struggle, where the opposition must be proportionably greater and more determined; in as much, as by far the majority of the people are too sensible of their privileges, and will be too tenacious of their happiness, to intrust the correction of the evils complained of, into the hands of men of violence and faction!

But leaving these observations to the good sense of my countrymen, my business is to shew, that under the supposition of the errors and abuses of government, being what they are said to be, they are such as come not within the possibility of a revolution to amend. The great question previously to be demanded is, what are the proposed objects of a revolution? There can be but two general intentions to be accomplished by it. The one is to correct the evils complained of, and still to preserve the same constitution. And the other is by annihilating the whole system as it now stands, to establish a republican government upon the ruins of monarchy.

If the former be the design, the very plan frustrates the intention. It can hardly escape the observation of any thinking person, the absurdity of hoping to accomplish a reform by tumult and disorder. For how should that possibly produce a reform in a state, which by snapping asunder the bands of all civil and religious compact, throws down all distinction, levels all order, and having violently unhung the government of the country, opens the door to the admission of every evil, and leaves no adequate powers to place it again on its

give up the many comforts and advantages we possess, to gratify the wishes of designing men?

I do not call simply upon men of fortune only, who have every thing to lose; but I appeal to all ranks and orders of people, for we have all every thing to fear. The poorest labourer, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, would wish to eat that bread when earned in quietness and comfort. But who shall ensure this to him, in a state of lawless tumult and disorder, with his habitation liable to be invaded every hour? where all private worth is unknown, and all public confidence lost; where no man can trust his brother, and where the perpetual versatility of order, and the fluctuating situation of men and things, changing like the tints of the chamelion from every surrounding object, must endanger the life of the lowest individual, whose sentiments do not always correspond with the opinion of the moment. Is it possible, in the prospect of such things, that any man can look on with unconcern, and coolly contemplate a revolution pregnant with such mighty evils? Nay, more than this, not only steadily behold the prospect of such events falling on this land, but be ready to put forth an helping hand to bring them forward. Ye that are unapprehensive of any personal inconvenience and danger, say, have you ever reflected on the sad uncertainty involved in contest, which sometimes sweeps away in the undistinguished mass, both friends and foes? Have you duly considered the possibility, that the evil may extend where least you wish it? And will not the endearing charities of father, brother, friend, restrain the strange unnatural wish for civil commotion? Methinks, even the man most closely wrapped up in selfish principles, must from the consideration of personal safety alone, if he thought properly, be prompted to caution. And in the history of the French revolution, experience hath amply shewn

the danger which attends the first promoters of daring innovation; and particularly that degree of danger, which he of all men is most exposed to, who "rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm." Where are the first leaders of the national convention? the Brisotts, the Petions, the Marats, the Robespierres, and a troop of such creatures of the day? Alas! time hath hardly counted three revolving suns in his journal, before that they, with thousands of a like complexion, have paid the just forfeit of their lives to the infamy of their cause. Had they foreseen the consequences, would they have engaged in the arduous enterprise? And yet they were men of the first talents, the most finished abilities for the undertaking; proficients in all the mysteries of chicanery and intrigue. But neither talents nor abilities are equal to any long sway in the prosecution of a cause founded in injustice, and supported but with blood. They are now no more. And their names if remembered, are remembered only to be execrated, and to afford so many awful examples of admonition to mankind, that neither art, nor the most consummate human policy, when employed in the support of base measures, can long screen from that just impending judgment of heaven, which, sooner or later, must overtake all such workers of iniquity.

ZION'S TRUMPET.

ZION'S TRUMPET.

CHAPTER I.

TO THE WATCHMEN UPON HER WALLS.

"And the sons of Aaron, the priest, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever, throughout your generations."—Numbers x. 8.

It would ill become the ministers in Zion to blow the trumpet to the camp in Israel, without first sounding an alarm in the holy mountain, and summoning the watchmen upon her walls every man to his post. We have professed in our title-page and preface, that our monthly proclamation of things sacred, is from the united labours of the ministers of the established church of this country; and while we blow the trumpet to rouse our countrymen to a more awakened vigilance in the holy warfare during the present interesting moment to Zion's peace, far be it from ourselves to lay heavy burthens on our people, and refuse to take an active part in the general plan for safety. The very distinguished office we hold in the ranks, demands the greater exertions in the department of duty; and we well know, that it is not only our province to sound an alarm, as watchful centinels on our respective posts, to intimate the approach of danger to our people; but also to plead for deliverance from the Lord. They, who in times past blew the trumpet in Zion, "wept also between the porch and the altar, and cried, spare thy people, O Lord! and give not thine heritage to reproach," Joel ii. 17.

If ever a period eminently demanded the awakenings of the watchmen to the spiritual concerns of Zion, the present is the one. "The Lord's judgments are in the earth." The enemy is under our very walls. The traitor gate must be closely guarded, or the garrison will be taken. Zion still holds out, blessed be her defender, for her Lord is in her. But "the Lord hath a controversy with his people, he will plead with Israel." In this season it becomes the duty of every one who wishes well to Zion, and especially her ministers, to be stirring. The most slothful may well take his hand from his bosom; the cripple cast away his crutches; and, in the hour of common danger, no one be inactive. When the trumpet is blown in Zion, even "the children and those who suck the breasts" are to be congregated. An universal cry must go up from all hearts. An universal exertion be made from all hands. Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to his land, and yet spare his people?

In sounding the 'first trumpet' to our watchmen, we only mean to call to the battle. The Lord is gone forth in the nations of the earth, and Zion's interests demands her watchmen's attention. We would remind all her sacred centinels, as we would desire to feel the full impression of the solemn remembrance on our own hearts also, of what the Lord hath said in seasons like the present. "Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, when I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning, shall deliver his soul.

But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul," (Ezek. xxxiii. 2—9.) Duties of this kind require faithfulness, vigilance, and honesty, together with much prayer to God. Like the beast we read of in the Revelations, chap. iv. 6. who stood to minister before the throne of God, who were full of eyes before and behind. The servants of the Lord Jesus need eyes before to look to the Lord for direction; eyes behind to look to their people around them in the ranks: and eyes within to examine strictly the state of their own hearts before the Lord. And services, cares, and anxieties, so interesting, constant, and laborious, will induce a life of unremitting fatigue, uninterrupted and unrelieved attention. It was the observation of Luther, '*Labores ecclesiasticæ succum exhauriunt ab imis medullis, senium mortemque accellerant*,' i. e. 'The labours of the ministry will exhaust the very marrow from your bones, and accelerate old age and death.'

Men, brethren, and fathers! we appeal to your tenderest feelings. The hour is critical. The moment interesting. We ask you, in the words of the man of mount Seir, "Watchman, what of the night?" But, if our watchmen are themselves unwakeful, uninformed,

uninterested; if a sleep of unconsciousness, a sleep of indolence, a sleep of carnal security be fallen upon them: nay, if they even blow the trumpet, but "give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Before therefore the awful commission is gone forth from the Lord, "to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy:" (Jer. xviii. 7.) before "that loud voice" be again heard, commanding the destroying angels, armed with the slaughter weapon, to "go through the midst of the city, to slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women, beginning at the sanctuary;"—may the Lord Jesus from his wounded side, "set his mark on the foreheads of his servants that sigh and cry for all the abominations of themselves and their people," (Ezek. ix. 4.) And may the Lord put a spirit of watchfulness, of prayer, and of labour, in all who are called the "ministers of God," that like the faithful of old, who wrought in the Lord's work with "their swords, their spears, and their bows," (Neh. iv.) the watchmen, whom the Lord hath stationed on the walls of Zion, may manifest, in the present hour of danger, whose they are, and whom they serve. Up, then, and be doing, and may the Lord be with you!

Soldiers of Christ arise,
And put your armour on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Thro' his eternal Son.

CHARLES.

CHAPTER II.

TO HER WATCHMEN WHICH GO ABOUT THE CITY.

"The watchmen, that go about the city, found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"—Cant. iii. 3.

Our first trumpet, according to order, was directed to the watchmen upon the walls of Zion. Our

second call to duty, in the present hour of general commotion, must be to the watchmen which go about the city. Having sounded the alarm in the holy mountain to summon every man to his post, whom the Lord hath appointed to defend the outworks of the garrison; we would next call up the watchmen, whose office it is to patrole within the ramparts for the preservation of peace and good order. And though, perhaps, strictly speaking, these are but different departments of one and the same office; yet distinguished as they are by the different stations, in which for the time they minister, they certainly require a diversity of attention and conduct, suited to the respective circumstances in which they act. To drop for a moment the figure: by watchmen on the walls of Zion, we understand those ministers of the sanctuary whom the Lord hath eminently distinguished by the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit; qualifying them for the defence and maintenance of the pure and essential doctrines of the gospel. Their duty is to watch over the mysteries of our holy faith with a jealousy and affection proportioned to their infinite importance: to observe narrowly the first approaches of heresy and error: and especially in an hour like the present, when the holy and eternal truths of the gospel are by artful and designing men subjected to the decision of "philosophy and vain deceit;" to "contend," and that earnestly, "for the faith once delivered to the saints." And blessed be the great Captain of the holy army, who hath "appointed salvation for walls and bulwarks." He hath graciously provided well-appointed soldiers to this province of duty. We can and do look round upon the walls of Zion, and behold men that are faithful to their post. And, though we believe that never since the days of the apostles, were the mysteries of our pure religion more warmly assaulted than in the present hour, we trust that they never were more ably defended. The Lord in this in-

stance, as in a thousand others, hath fulfilled his blessed promise; "that when the enemy cometh in like a flood, his Spirit shall lift up a standard against him."

But, while these men are watchful on their posts to defend the city against the incursions of the foe from without; there are others also to be employed in strengthening the common interests of Zion within. By the watchmen going about the city, we understand those characters, whose province, though not so conspicuous in the ranks as the former, yet becomes equally as useful. It would be indeed of little value or importance to preserve the holy city from being trodden down of the enemy, if the citizens themselves were regardless of their privileges and immunities. Hence, therefore, while the soldiers on the walls defend, the soldiers, which go about the city, encourage and comfort the people within. Their office is to watch over themselves, their people, and their doctrine: to seek out the disorderly, and pick up wanderers; to awaken the drowsy, to alarm the careless, to comfort the desponding, to support the "hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and to say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong." In a word, to suit themselves to the various wants of the camp in Israel, and by every engaging and persuasive method, "in season, and out of season," to build up, as well themselves as their people, "in their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." And these different departments of duty in one and the same office, afford an extensive scope for the exercise of the various talents and gifts, with which it has pleased the King of Zion to qualify and commission his servants to the holy warfare. And, to adopt another beautiful figure of scripture, which the apostle hath made use of when adverting to the same subject, in this great family of our Lord, "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but of wood and earth:" but it is an animating consideration to the humblest and most inconsiderable

servant in this household, that all their ministerial qualifications "worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." They are all gifts of grace, not effects of merit; given to every man to profit "withal;" and every vessel is "a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use," when ministering as of the ability that God giveth, "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

To the watchmen which go about the city, Zion's Trumpet now sounds. We need not intimate, how critical to the interests of our common faith is the present moment. It cannot but have struck the most supine and inattentive, that amidst the noise of contending nations, our religious appearances carry with them an unfavourable aspect. We evidently see much to lament and more to fear. The church itself, generally speaking, while the enemy is storming without, is falling into a sleep of security within. And what makes it more portentous and alarming is, that while the bridegroom tarries, not only the foolish but the wise virgins also slumber. Many of our venerable watchmen, who, whilst with us, were active upon their posts, as if to shew us our danger, the Lord hath called off. "Grey hairs are here and there upon their survivors, and they know it not." Nor is this all: we dare not dissemble. Many of our watchmen, as in the prophet's days, are "blind; they are ignorant; they are dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber; they all look to their own way; every one for gain from his quarter." The question is too common among them, what is to be *gained?* not what is to be *done?* "They seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." In this state of affairs, our eyes (as to instruments in the divine hand) are to YOU, who feel concern for the common safety. We fancy we hear, or we would fain persuade ourselves that we

hear, the solemn inquiry coming up out of the midst of the camp, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" And, under an anxious concern for the revival of vital godliness, we would reply in the awakening words of the Redeemer himself to his church at Sardis: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation. And may the good hand of our God be upon us, that while he directs to the method, his grace may bless the attempt, and both together concur to impress the awful charge upon your souls and our own also, that we "take heed to the ministry which we have received of the Lord," that we fulfil it.

What we have to offer to the watchmen, which go about the city, may be comprized under these leading particulars; to watch over our doctrine, our conduct, and our people. Each branch of duties so extensive and important, opens an ample sphere for the sound of Zion's Trumpet: and on each we would earnestly and affectionately say, as before, "Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation."

1. Our doctrine. The direction may be compressed within this one general rule: to make the adorable name, grace, and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, whose watchmen we are, the constant, uniform topic of all our public preaching and private conversation. This was the conduct which that faithful watchman in the camp adopted, who "determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And if happily we know in our own experience, as he did in his, that it is "the power of God and the wisdom of God to every one that believeth;" we must know also, that "there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Let us not therefore imitate the plan of modern divinity, in which, if the Lord Jesus be at all introduced, he is thrown into

the back ground of the representation; but let his sacred person be the first and principal object of the whole painting; where in fact the whole design, colouring, and execution is only varied, in order to introduce him under all his gracious and endearing characters; so that he may appear to every beholder what he is in himself, "the altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand." And while we thus make it our daily employment and nightly watchword, in going about the city, and from camp to camp, to hold up the Lord Jesus as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the author and finisher of salvation to his people; while we endeavour to animate the minds of the soldiers in the holy army with these refreshing views of their great Captain; let us no less insist on the earnest attendance of every individual on the work of his blessed Spirit in the heart, to give every one a personal knowledge of his interest in him. It forms a very important part in the office of the spiritual watchmen in Israel, while recommending the finished salvation of the Saviour *to* the sinner, to see that great regard be paid to the Spirit's work for the purpose of finishing it in the heart *of* the sinner. A knowledge of personal interest in the righteousness, merit, and death of the Lord Jesus, can only be produced by the operation of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. It is he which must "take of the things of Jesus, and shew them unto his people." And where this point is unnoticed by our watchmen, or little regarded, there is no life or animation in the camp of Israel. And if we may venture to speak out, and to trace the present evils of Zion to their source, we do not hesitate to say, that hence arises the sad declension of vital godliness in our church, and among our people. The Lord Jesus is not constantly acknowledged, as he ought to be, the head of his church: neither is the influence of his Holy Spirit sought for as the grand principle of quickening, con-

victing, and converting the souls of men. Hence, therefore, though our ordinances continue, the Lord of ordinances is not in them. We have the mantle, but not the Lord God of Elijah. See to it, therefore, brethren, that ye "be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." And let our watchmen which go about the city, stir up the minds of the brethren by way of remembrance. And to earnest labours let us join earnest prayers, without which indeed we shall watch in vain, and spend our strength for nought. Let us implore the north-wind and the south-wind to blow upon our Zion, that the spices may flow out. And, while we watch over our garden in repairing the walls broken down and cleansing the paths, let us earnestly invite the Redeemer to "come into his garden, and eat of his own pleasant fruits."

2. But it will not be enough, as watchmen going about the city, to take heed to our doctrine, we must take heed to our personal conduct also. Every watchman in the camp of Israel hath a soul of his own to watch for, as well as those of his people. And, independent of the wretched effects which must ever follow a profession and practice militating against each other; what a very awful event must it prove in the close of life for a man to be obliged to apply to himself that reproach: "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Imagination cannot form a character more hateful and disgusting, than that of a man who carries on a duplicity of conduct in matters of eternal obligation. And, though perhaps the frequency of the case hath served in a great measure to reconcile the mind to the view of a monster of such hideous deformity; yet when we take it out of the sacred order, and represent it among the ordinary walks of life, the portrait instantly begets horror in every beholder. When men profess one

thing and do another; when they pledge themselves by promises which they never perform; there is no hesitation to stigmatize such characters with the opprobrium they deserve. And why the more solemn engagements between God and men should appear less reprehensible, when violated, is surely hard to say. And yet daily experience proves, that while we consider the open breaches of human contracts as more or less abominable, according to their degree of atrocity; we look on, and indeed not unfrequently without much concern, as unconscious of the offence, when those breaches are made in our solemn engagements with God. Do you pause to inquire in what instances these things occur? We answer,—In all those instances where men subscribe, solemnly subscribe to doctrines as true, which in the moment of subscription they believe to be false: and which belief they afterwards betray in speaking and writing of them, both from the pulpit and the press. In how many various and multiform ways this conduct manifests itself, in the duplicity of some, the inattention of others, their coldness, indifference, neglect, irregularity, shame-facedness in the Redeemer's service, and the long catalogue of evils which mark the character of unfaithful watchmen, would lead into too wide a field for our present purpose. Would to God the charge was as groundless as the responsibility is awful. But we tremble while we contemplate the horrible termination of such duplicity. Oh! Sirs, the day is hastening when the Lord Jesus will burst forth from heaven, accompanied with his mighty angels, "to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And, amidst the multitudes which will then appear in the valley of decision, fancy, if it be possible, how eminently distinguished in the throng of misery, will be the man, who in this life assumed the office of a watchman, only to betray his trust, to act un-

faithfully, and to deliver up his Lord's interests into the enemy's hands!!!

> "I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
> Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
> Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
> That he is honest in the sacred cause.
> To such I render more than mere respect,
> Whose actions say, that they respect themselves.
> But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
> In conversation frivolous, in dress
> Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse,
> Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
> And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,
> By infidelity and love of world,
> To make God's work a sinecure, a slave
> To his own pleasures and his patron's pride.—
> From such apostles, Oh, ye mitred heads,
> Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
> On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn."
>
> *Cowper's Task*, B. ii. p. 64.

3. The finishing part of the watchman's character and office is, to watch for the *people*. "We watch for your souls," (says the apostle,) "as they that must give account." Indeed for this express purpose the office itself is appointed. And to what extent it is to be exercised; with what earnestness followed up; how unremitting the labour; how arduous and difficult the undertaking; and with what perpetual anxiety pursued; words are not equal to express. For if the Lord's people in their private capacity, when once regenerated by the Divine Spirit, are said to be "no longer their own, but bought with a price;" and as such are enjoined to "glorify God in their body and in their spirit which are God's:" how much more ought they to be dedicated to his service, who are supposed to be doubly his, both by purchase and by voluntary surrender! Watchmen by our own consent and by solemn investiture, surely our persons, our time, our talents, our gifts, our graces, in short our all, both soul and body, are the Lord's! And when we look round and see duties arising out of every situation of our people, in the

various wants and necessities which make up the human character; there can hardly exist a question but that the watchmen who go about the city, from public employment through all the departments of private ministration, must find an endless succession to engage their labours, and to call forth all their exertions. The stated work, (if in a life of this kind any can be called stated,) is not over, when, (to carry on our figure,) the watchman of the guard at night is relieved by the morning watch: other duties constantly come forward to exercise the faithful soldier through the day; and he finds no time to put off his armour, until he be undressed altogether for the sleep of death. There will be the sick to visit; and the mourners in Zion to comfort; and the broken-hearted and convinced sinner will break in upon the man of God at all seasons, when relief is most wanted to sooth the soul with his consolation and advice. And, when retiring from every human eye, the watchman of the house of Israel, like the great Watchman and High Priest of our profession, who watches over the wants and sorrows of all his people, to present them before the throne, will be carrying up his own wants and those of his people, their names, their persons, their trials, their cries; and wrestling night and day with God in prayer; putting the whole into the hands of the great Advocate, and watching thereunto with a perseverance that will take no denial, and with an earnestness that cannot be refused.

We pause while we thus blow the trumpet in Zion, not for respite from the labour, but for the purpose of looking up with admiration and with thankfulness to the gracious head of his church; that, amidst such labours and duties, he hath counted any faithful, "putting them into the ministry." And, while we look up to him with an eye of supplication, that the dear Lord of his people, in compassion to never dying souls, will

thrust forth into his service more honest disinterested watchmen; we look round with affection to our fellow-servants in his household, that the God of all grace may strengthen both the hands and hearts of those already in the camp of duty. The time is awful indeed, but the same God reigneth: and in his strength we may go forth, not only armed for the battle, but assured of conquest. We confess, indeed, that a vigilance proportioned to our warfare will expose us to censure and the lash of tongues. An active watchman is too great a reproach to the idle, to escape their ridicule. He must expect to be deemed an enthusiast, that feels a warmth in his Master's service, unsuited to the general coldness of the frigid atmosphere around. But live down the clamour, by living above the reach of it. The sun is not interrupted in its orbit by clouds and vapours below. Let the world reproach; let man condemn. "Study to shew thyself approved of God." One whisper of the great Master's approbation in a dying hour, will infinitely counterbalance all the clamours of the vain and sensual. Brethren, we are your "companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ:" and we commit and commend you to him, who is "able to keep you from falling, and to grant you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." And may the dear Lord of his church and people, again build up Zion, that her beauty may appear! Lord, we would say, "return, thou God of Hosts, behold and visit this vine! Let not thy holy city be a wilderness, let not Zion be a wilderness, nor Jerusalem a desolation! Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"

CHAPTER III.

TO THE CAMP IN ISRAEL.

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand."—Joel ii. 1.

We need not usher in our message to Israel's camp, with either preface or apology. When the watchmen upon the walls of Zion, and the watchmen which go about the city, have both been summoned to their respective posts; the necessity of the measure is implied, and the whole camp of Israel cannot but be interested in the same. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" is a question of the prophet's, which carries with it its own answer, and waits not for a reply.

It were to trifle with the feelings of the mind to insist upon what is too obvious to escape observation, that the present moment is pregnant with great events. Even the unawakened eye, unaccustomed as it hath hitherto been to observe any thing of a divine government in the affairs of men, is now opened in part to perceive somewhat unusual in the present strife of nations, and seems more than half convinced, that it is the Lord's judgments which are now going on in the earth. And surely among those who name the name of Christ, there will not be the smallest delay "to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it," and to conclude that "the Lord hath a controversy with his people, that he will plead with Israel." While, therefore, we lift up "the voice like a trumpet, to shew the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins;" we are led to hope that the camp in Israel are in some sort prepared for our message, and under the divine teachings are anticipating what the "will of the Lord is." Never was there a period in which the language of the

prophet became more applicable than in the present. It may truly be said to us, as to them of old, "even from the days of your fathers have ye been going away from the Lord." And the Lord hath not left himself without witness in that he hath been repeatedly calling in his word, and by his providence, both in judgments and in mercies, in that tender and expostulating voice, "return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord." But at length the call is increased, and the alarming denunciation which God threatens in a "seven times more chastisement to them who accept not the punishment of their iniquity," (Lev. xxvi.) seems to be coming on. Wisdom now may be said indeed "to cry aloud, and understanding to put forth her voice. She standeth on the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the door." And most awful will be the final issue of such aggravated contumacy, if the event which distinguished Israel of old, be the conduct of Israel now: "I set watchmen over you, (saith the Lord,) saying, hearken to the sound of the trumpet; but they said, we will not hearken." (Jerem. vi. 17.)

We shall have fully answered the commission with which as watchmen we are intrusted, when we have delivered our solemn message to the camp in Israel; and shewn, in the sad marks of our people's departure from the Lord, the cause of divine visitation: and then, from a due sense and conviction of having traced up the evil which we at present deplore to its only source, to point out what is most certainly our duty, and which, if followed, will as certainly cause the Lord to return to us with blessings: and fold up the whole with very earnest prayer to God that his grace may enable his people to "put away the stumbling-block of iniquity out of the land."

The first object proposed in "Zion's Trumpet to the

camp in Israel," is to shew, in the sad marks of our people's departure from the Lord, the cause of divine visitations:—and here we need not go far in quest of evidences. The departure from the Lord, nationally considered, is not in the mere forms and ceremonies of worship, concerning which the best of men in the present fallen state of being will frequently see differently: but the departure of which the faithful watchmen on the walls of Zion complain in their people, is in the grand and most essential points of the gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ is evidently that "chief corner-stone, elect and precious," (1 Pet. ii. 6.) on which Zion herself is built. The supreme Father, long before the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, called Israel to "behold his laying it," (Isa. xxviii. 16.) And the blessed Spirit hath in all ages set to his seal, that "he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." But in the daring denial of the Deity of his person, and the operations of his Spirit, with which this nation hath of late years openly brought forward her champions; is not the Lord Jesus become to all such "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence?" And in the horrid attempts with which the uncovered hand of noon-day infidelity hath aimed to dig up this precious stone of the foundation of every true believer's eternal hope, do we not see how Zion herself is made to totter? For if all gospel doctrines, blessings, and privileges center in Christ, and arise out of him, can the church itself stand if the foundation-stone be loosened? While, therefore, the horn of infidelity is sounded through the land, and carries in its poisonous blast blasphemous reports, tending "to deny the Lord that bought them;" do we not see in the solemn visitations of God which follow, the Lord's jealousy for his honour? And though, blessed be his adorable name, in the worst of times the Lord hath still a seed that serve him, and which bear testimony to his truth: yet we find the suspicions which have been raised

in the minds of the credulous and vain, in consequence of the rumours of infidelity, have not been without their melancholy effects in our church and among our people. The sweet and wholesome doctrines of grace, in the regeneration of the heart; the seeking justification through the sole righteousness, merits, and death of the Lord Jesus; and the application of the Saviour's fulness and all-sufficiency to the sinner's necessity, by the Spirit's teaching, can never be so earnestly accepted or sought after, if questions are made to arise in the mind through the corruption of nature, and the artifice of the enemy, as to the grand foundation of the whole, in the Deity of the Lord Jesus. And hence it is we find so little vital godliness in the camp of Israel. Those blessed precious truths of salvation on which our fathers lived, and fed, and kept house, are now offensive to our hearers. Instead of preaching Christ and his merciful offices for lost souls, as the only suitable topic for ruined sinners, moral essays, and pompous declarations of the rectitude of human nature, are substituted in their place. What was the reproach of Israel of old is the condemnation of Israel now; "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means;" and what finisheth the sad relation is, "the people love to have it so," (Jerem. v. 31.) Is it to be wondered at then, that all the consequent effects of a departure from the Lord in the grand and most essential points of the gospel should manifest themselves in all the departments of conduct through the whole camp of Israel? Departed from the Lord in his truth, the glory is departed from Israel. Ichabod is written on the walls of the house. Hence that weariness in ordinances, that coldness in seasons of worship, that love of pleasure, that disregard to divine things, and that general insensibility even to the cause of our national calamity. The Lord hath said, "I will hide my face from them: I will see what their end shall be. For they are a very froward

generation, children in whom is no faith." And when the Lord withdraws his presence from the assemblies of his people, Shiloh itself is but a hissing and a proverb of reproach!

2. What is our duty under a due sense of our situation, will not be difficult to shew, if divine grace hath mercifully granted conviction in the heart of our sins, and God's punishment of them. "Return unto me, the Lord (still) saith, and I will return unto you." That is a sweet evidence of a sanctified affliction, when it brings the heart *to* God, instead of carrying it *from* God. And the same reasoning holds equally good with nations as with individuals; when trouble brings in prayer, prayer brings in the Lord. If Israel's camp will "take with them words, and turn to the Lord, because they have fallen by their iniquity;" the promise is immediately, "I will heal their backsliding, (saith the Lord) I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away." And while the Lord declares, "he will visit for these things," if these things are removed, the very cause of visitation ceases. And depend upon it, if the Lord graciously lead the hearts of his people to prayer, the prayer that is awakened by grace will be answered in mercy. What endearing arguments shall we make use of to produce this blessed effect? We would say with the Psalmist, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee." Oh! it is a time for prayer, fervent, constant, importunate prayer. Had we a few Jacobs in our day to wrestle with God in prayer, and to take no denial, until Zion's holy solemnities, and that which makes her best offerings precious and truly valuable, were restored (even the Lord Jesus in his person and offices) in our assemblies, all might be well. And have we not more than Jacob, even the Lord Jesus himself to go to, who stands in the midst of the throne, as a Lamb that had been slain, bearing on his glorified body the marks of our

redemption? To him then let us go—"The Lord is yet in Zion; her King is in her." And where Jesus is, there must be safety. Let but his Holy Spirit remove our sins, and quicken our souls; let but God arise, and our enemies shall be scattered. When God returns to his people, it is according to his promise, to heal their land: "Then will I return (he saith himself) to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord with one consent," Zeph. iii. 9.

3. We have anticipated in part, what was intimated under the last particular of God's return to his people with blessings, when they returned to him in prayer. But otherwise we might say, that all mercies, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, are comprised in the sweet visits of the Redeemer's love, when he comes with grace to pardon and forgive. Beautifully it is said of him by the prophet, that "To them that love his name shall he arise as a Sun of righteousness," to warm, and make fruitful, and enlighten, "with healing in his wings." Passing by, however, the multiform manifestations of his benignity, and to advert only to the more immediate cause of Zion's Trumpet now sounding to the camp in Israel, in the present portentous prospect around, we are authorized to say, that the presence of Jacob's God is the best security to his own interests, and the greatest terror to all that rise against him. Let God be but in the midst of Zion, and "she shall not be removed, God shall help her, and that right early." The promise is rich indeed, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her," Zech. ii. 5. The enemy, like Egypt of old, may say, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them." But our God will look unto the host "through the pillar of fire, and of the cloud, and trouble the host," so that they shall say, "let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them."

Dear Lord! let but the sweet effects of thy grace be wrought in the hearts of thy people, and we shall assuredly yet sing of the gracious effects of thy power on the necks of all our enemies. Commission the message thou now sendest by feeble watchmen to thy camp in Israel, with thine own blessed influence, and thy word shall not return void. Put away "the stumbling-block of the iniquity of this people from before their faces," and thou wilt put away the punishment at the same time, which our sins deserve. "Arise, and have mercy upon Zion, for it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come. So shall the heathen fear thy name, O Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory."

CHARLES.

CHAPTER IV.

TO THE DESERTERS FROM THE CAMP OF ISRAEL.

"Go, and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever." —Jer. iii. 12.

Our last alarm was directed to the holy army admonishing the faithful to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Our present object is to sound the trumpet of salvation to the deserters from the camp of Israel. Having manifested the engaging tenderness and regard of the great Captain, to all that fight under his banner, we are authorized to call upon all that have wandered from his standard, to return to the Lord, that "he may have mercy upon them, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon." "Go, and proclaim these words, and say, Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings, saith the Lord," is the sweet and persuasive message with which we are intrusted. And while we go forth

into the streets and highways of the city with our trumpet, giving "the certain sound," may the Lord accompany us with his grace, and make his people "a willing people in the day of his power."

In following up the object of our present embassy, we gladly avail ourselves of the preface to a little work which hath fallen within our observation, intitled, 'A Prop against Despair;' which so fully answers our wishes in holding forth arguments of persuasion to induce sinners to return to the Lord, that we make no apology either to the author, or our readers, for using it upon this occasion. We only beg of him whose province it is to bless the labours of men, to commission it by his grace for the purpose intended, and very cheerfully adopt it in our monthly publication.

The author having premised in his introduction, that the glorious gospel of the ever blessed God is not preached with that freedom and fulness which its great Author commanded, and the necessity of sinners evidently requires; proceeds to observe, that, according to every principle of the gospel, there can be but one great and leading idea entertained concerning it, viz. that it is a glorious display of mercy to a lost world; originating in the sovereign, free, and unmerited grace of God; and proclaimed to mankind as a finished salvation through the sole merits, righteousness, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In which rich plan of redemption, there are these striking particularities eminently distinguished.

As first. The gospel considers all men, universally speaking, as lost; and all equally incapable of putting forth an helping hand toward the attainment of their own salvation. For it is the unalterable sense of scripture, that it was "when we were without strength, and in due time, that Christ died for the ungodly." Observe the expression; not simply when we were maimed or crippled in our faculties by reason of sin; not when

some strength remained, however small, which, when co-operating with other aid, might have procured our recovery; but when all possible resources in ourselves were lost; "without strength;" or (as it is elsewhere more strongly expressed) when we were altogether "dead in trespasses and sins;" as if some mighty mountain had fallen upon our nature, and crushed all our powers.

And this view of mankind, in which the gospel considers our nature as universally lost, represents it also as universally undeserving, in every instance, of divine favour. This forms a second striking feature in the gospel of Jesus. The gospel of the Lord Jesus makes no distinction in the objects of its clemency, as if one man became more or less worthy of grace than another: for the positive language of scripture, on this point is, that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And however gratifying it may be to the unmortified pride of nature, when at any time making comparative views of man with man, to fancy one more excellent than his neighbour; the gospel knows of no distinction but what grace hath made among creatures of universal depravity and corruption. Such notions may float on the imagination of the vain and unawakened, who are strangers to the plague of their own hearts; but they lose their very existence before God. The debtor of five hundred, or the debtor of fifty pence, being both alike insolvent and unable to pay, are both alike equally exposed to the prison; and must continue so for ever, unless the goodness of the Almighty Creditor should pass an act of grace, and frankly forgive them their respective debts. Indeed, the dear Lord of his people, as if to encourage the most timid mind, when overpowered with the sense of multiplied transgressions, and to prevent all despondency, mercifully taught in this view of nature's insolvency, in this very parable of the debtors, that as the greatness or littleness

of the debt is the same, both as it respects the state of the sinner's mind in violating the divine precept, and as it concerns the divine mind in the exercise of mercy; the difference is wholly on the part of man, and not on the part of God. "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."* Our gratitude for pardoning love will be in proportion to the sense we have of its extent. For, though it may well be supposed that all ransomed debtors, when their fetters are broken off and the prison doors thrown open, will sing "to the praise and glory of his grace," by whom their salvation is procured;

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* See Luke vii. 36 to 50.—Few persons seem to be duly sensible of this most unquestionable truth, though it be confirmed to us, both by the plainest matter of fact and by the authority of an apostle. St. James in his 2d chapter, says, that "whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point is guilty of all." And for this plain reason, because in breaking the law in one point, he evidently manifests his disregard to the authority of the Lawgiver, as much as he would by the breach of another: and consequently, if he be restrained from breaking it in all, this does not arise from a cordial reverence to God, for that is already given up in the first instance. Hence, therefore, the man that knowingly ventures to violate the obedience which he owes to God's law in one commandment, would as certainly do it in every other, if the temptation and the motive were equally powerful. This is so plain a matter of fact, that it cannot be denied. So that, in accounting for the different degrees of transgression amongst men, we may refer them to other causes, and not to an internal approbation of the law of God. And in the various situations of life, and the variety of temptations arising out of them, in the constitutional features of the mind, and above all, in the preventing and restraining grace of God; in these alone we shall find the real and adequate reasons, why offences abound in some more than in others. The deadly seed of sin is the same in all. But, like the seed of hemlock, not cast in the earth, that will remain inert and inactive, which, if falling into a suitable soil, would have brought its poisonous fruit. Sin in the heart, not brought into action, is like seed not used, but laid by in a chest, or other receptacle. Drop it into its mother earth, and the consequence is certain, and soon appears. So that it is the absence only of those contingents, which are necessary to give it birth, which accounts for its inactivity in some cases, and not in others.

If you, my reader, before whom these lines appear, be ready to call in question this statement of our fallen nature, I can only lament your unconsciousness of it, and that on a double account. First, because, according to scripture, nothing can be more fatal to a due apprehension of the infinite importance of salvation by Christ, than this blindness and ignorance of the heart. And, secondly, because, in respect to the happiness of the present life, you certainly lose one of the sweetest enjoyments the mind is capable of receiving here below, in not knowing that "they that are kept are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation," 1 Peter i. 5.

yet his will be the loudest note, whose recovery hath been the most gracious, the most undeserved, and unexpected.

And what sums up and completes this finished view of the gospel, is the third prominent character of it, in superadding to both those gracious properties this striking particularity, that it is altogether unconditional on the part of God, and requires no previous qualification or worth on the part of man. Indeed the highly favoured objects of such rich bounty, as is shewn in the gospel, being all along considered as "without strength, and dead in trespasses and sins; and having the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in him who raiseth the dead;" it would be a contradiction in terms to suppose, that characters so described should be capable of doing any thing to help, or bringing any thing to recommend them to the divine favour. For even "repentance and faith," those most essential qualifications of the mind, for the participation and enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel (and which all real disciples of the Lord Jesus cannot but possess) are never supposed as a condition which the sinner performs to entitle him to mercy, but merely as evidences that he is brought, and hath obtained mercy. They cannot be the conditions of obtaining salvation; for, like the gospel itself, both faith and repentance are the immediate result of the divine operation, and are the gift of God. The same hand which bestows the gospel, bestows also faith and repentance, or the sinner would never obtain them. The blessed Redeemer of mankind is called both the author and finisher of faith; and is said to be exalted to give repentance and remission of sins. And when his servant, the apostle, declares that believers are saved by grace through faith, he as positively declares also, that this is the gift of God. "Unto you (he says) it is given to believe." I could as easily create a world,

as create either faith or repentance in my own heart. Both are of divine origin; and, like the light, and the rain, and the dew of heaven, "which tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men," are from above, and "come down from the Father of lights, from whom alone cometh every good and every perfect gift."

This view of the gospel (and which certainly is the only true view of it) serves to place it in that light, which corresponds with our purest and most exalted notions of the beneficence of God, and answers to all the necessities of man. For it consists of nothing but invitations, promises, assurances, and the strongest declarations of mercy, followed up by innumerable instances of those who have been made the happy partakers of it, from one end of the bible to the other. It seems to court the observation, to solicit the attention, and to invite the acceptance of the miserable and the wretched to its warmest embraces. And, that no broken-hearted sinner might despair in fancying himself placed beyond the reach of this rich tide of mercy, which flows continually without ebbing; it is not enough to say, that it washes on the shore of the undeserving, but it reaches to the ground of the ill-deserving: not barely to those who have done nothing to merit mercy, but even to those who have done every thing to merit punishment. It rises therefore above high water mark, overflows all bounds, overtops even the tallest mountains of corruption, and demonstrates what one of the apostles declared, and thousands of sinners have found to be true, that "where sin abounded grace hath much more abounded."

Such being undeniably the state of the case in reference to the gospel; and which, on account of the boundless extent of its mercy, is very properly termed "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" it next follows, that to preach the gospel under any limitations, restric-

tions, or reserve whatever, in proposing *conditions* to the sinner, as constituting his title to a participation of its blessings, is to invert the very order of the gospel; and, instead of holding forth salvation to the *lost*, is only to propose strength to the *whole*. Just as absurd would it be in a physician to send away his patient, when labouring under some desperate disease, with a recommendation to do *his utmost* towards his own cure, and then to come to him to finish it; as it is in the minister of the gospel to propose to the sinner *to do his best*, by way of healing the disease of the soul, and then to come to the Lord Jesus to perfect his recovery. The only previous qualification is to know our misery, and the remedy is prepared. And as the Lord Jesus himself, when upon earth, in opening his commission in the synagogue of Nazareth, declared that "He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to give deliverance to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord:" it must follow by an undeniable inference, that the office to which he hath appointed his servants who minister in his name, is to preach freely and fully the same gospel of salvation. I consider, therefore, the several churches of Christ on earth as so many market-places of public resort, established for this express purpose, where proclamation is continually supposed to be made to the poor, and to the wretched, the weary, and the heavy laden, to come with their several wants unto him, who alone can supply them, and give rest unto their souls, without money and without price. And it is very certain, that the various ordinances of worship, which the Lord Jesus hath appointed in his church, are for this purpose, and this only—that they may become so many channels of communication, under the blessed Spirit's operation, between Christ and his people, by which empty, needy, distressed, and bur-

thened sinners may bring their wants, and their cares, their sorrows, and their sins, before the Lord, and receive a suitable supply out of his abundant fulness, and "grace for grace." And were I to drop into a church of christians, professing the eternal truths of the gospel, and found not evidences of these things, but discovered that moral essays were supplying the place of evangelical truths; that the person of the Lord Jesus, and his precious offices to lost souls, were not made the great topic of discourse; I should be led to conclude that I had mistaken my path, and had fallen into a synagogue of the Jews, and not the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My brother in the ministry! (if peradventure one of the sacred order should condescend to be among my readers) shall I intreat you not to be offended with this statement of the case, neither hastily to turn away from the serious consideration of a subject which involves, in its final consequences, the everlasting welfare both of ourselves and our people? Do not fancy that this doctrine leads to licentiousness, or that any poor *self-condemned* and broken-hearted sinner, can possibly adopt the horrible maxim of "continuing in sin that grace may abound." And for characters of a different description, with whom both the awful threats of the law, and the sweet allurements of the gospel have lost all their influence, there can be no apprehension. They wrest whatever is preached, as they do also the "scriptures themselves, unto their own destruction." And, would any man, in compliment to such persons, hold forth a restrained, mutilated, half-preached gospel? For my part, I am not afraid to imitate him in whose service I minister, by preaching a full, free, and finished salvation, through the sole merits, death, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And while I trace the footsteps of mercy in his history when upon earth, in going about the streets of Jerusalem, constantly

inviting sinners to come to him for life and salvation; while I see him now with the eye of faith on his throne of glory, calling unto such persons in all the ends of the earth, to "look unto him and be saved;" while every ordinance of worship is uniformly directed to follow up the Saviour's declaration of mercy, that "if any man thirst and come to him, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and while the Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely;" I am not afraid to echo to these glorious proclamations of grace, nor fear I to exceed my commission in declaring, that "He can and will save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; and that all that do come he will in no wise cast out?" Nay, in the market-days of his church, were I to perceive a case of more than ordinary wretchedness, in some poor *self-loathing* sinner, who, like the publican Jesus describes, dared not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, I should particularly direct my message to *him*, and say, "to *you* is the word of this salvation *sent*." For the only difference known in the church of the Lord Jesus, is that which arises from a penitential sense of wretchedness, and faith in divine mercy. And where these qualities have the precedence, the most famished and the most hungry after the person and righteousness of the Redeemer, are first to be supplied. But while I feel a growing confidence in thus publishing salvation according to the directions of the Saviour; forgive me if I add, I cannot but be awfully concerned for those who restrain the truths of redemption, and preach gospel mercies as if they were the *sale*, and not the free *gift* of God.

My poor brother, for whom I write, whose heart the Lord hath touched with a sense of sin, and a desire of salvation, and whose self-condemnation every action subscribes to, hear the call of grace; and while the

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heavenly voice sweetly sounds, "Return, thou backslider, and I will heal your backsliding," let your whole soul echo back to the gracious invitation, "Behold I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God."

But from man I turn to the Lord. I know that every thing is alike ineffectual, unless directed to the heart from above. Will the Lord be graciously pleased to commission my feeble call with his divine power, and send it to the heart of some poor self-condemned and despairing sinner! And if the success of my embassy be never known upon earth, it will open a new source of thanksgiving and joy, when the writer and reader shall meet before the throne of glory, mutually striving which hath most cause to sing with the loudest note to the praise of redeeming grace, in ascribing "salvation to God and the Lamb."

CHARLES.

CHAPTER V.

TO GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE, THE JEWS.

"Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. And they, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them."—Ezek. ii. 3, 5.

We humbly hope that we shall not offend our elder brethren in the church of God, if, while blowing the trumpet in Zion among the gentiles, we direct one friendly blast towards the ancient house of Israel. We cannot but feel a pious veneration for every thing connected with the stock of Abraham, and behold with an awakened concern the temple so long despoiled of its best ornaments. When we call to mind "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," and see Israel scattered abroad without government, without sanctuary, without Urim

and Thummim, and the ark of the divine presence removed and gone; we cannot but ardently long for that day, when "the Lord will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof," Amos ix. 11. We feel, moreover, an anxiety for the spiritual welfare of Israel on another account, viz. a well-grounded conviction that "blindness in part hath happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the gentiles be come in." And bound, as we are, to bless God that "through their fall salvation is come unto us gentiles," we cannot but desire that this may act as a stimulus "to provoke them to jealousy." And if any additional argument be needed to apologize for sounding one alarm in the holy mountain, what argument can be equally persuasive as that which from scripture authority assures us, that the return of our elder brethren, the Jews, to the church of God, will occasion a vast accession of converts from the gentile world, and swell the stream which makes glad the city of God. "Ten men," the promise declares, "shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you," Zech. viii. 23. And this must be the case; "for if the fall of the Lord's people be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the gentiles; what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Full of all these grand and interesting ideas, involving in them both gratitude to the Lord, affection to his people, and the actual interest of thousands; you will not, you cannot indeed but believe us sincere, when we assure you that our prayers and our best wishes are called forth, that the Lord would visit his ancient people with his great salvation, and hasten that long-promised period, when "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob," Isa. lix. 20. "When Jehovah shall inherit

Judah his portion, in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. And many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day, and shall be his people, and the Lord shall be in the midst of them," Zech. ii. 12, 13.

You will not need from us the smallest information, that the present day of the world is full of eventful providences. The womb of time is not only pregnant with wonderful circumstances to call up a more than ordinary attention; but the convulsions of kingdoms have already brought forth, and are continuing to bring forth, the most extraordinary and preternatural productions. It were to suppose Israel lost to every principle, could it be imagined that in such a period their nation remained uninterested, unconcerned, and regardless of the events around them. We may well conclude that every eye is directed now towards Zion, and every heart among them warmed with the expectation that God is about to visit his people. The prophecies yet remaining to be fulfilled, and the vast lapse of time since their delivery, having brought on the world to the present advanced age, both favour the pleasing presumption, that the period draweth nigh. In such moments we take it for granted that the truly serious among the stock of Abraham are studying the sacred oracles with increased regard both night and day, like their holy men of old, to "understand by their books" the number of years of unfulfilled prophecies; and by fasting and prayer to get upon "the watch-tower," to see what the Lord is about to do, and when reproved what to answer. Dan. ix. 2. Hab. ii. 1. It would be both superfluous and incompatible indeed with the brevity of our design, to select from the sacred writings all the various declarations of the prophets, which relate to the calling home God's ancient people the Jews. But it will answer every purpose, if we gather into one point of view the more leading characters of scripture prophecy which refer to this great

event. For, very happily for the occasion, they are capable of being brought within a narrow compass, and converging as they do like rays of light into one focus, they become luminous and clear to the object intended. We have only to pray, that the Lord God of the prophets may direct them to the heart.

The uniform language of scripture prophecy, with respect to the recovery of the people of Israel in the last days, (for we pass over those which relate to controverted points, for very obvious causes) leads to this certain conclusion; that "in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it," Isa. ii. 2. Mich. iv. 1. That "though the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:" yet "afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," Hosea iii. 4, 5. That "on that day it shall come to pass that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time (observe the very striking expression, *the second time)* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth," Isa. xi. 11, 12. It were to trifle with the human mind to suppose any explanation necessary to terms so truly plain and obvious. The recovery of Israel from the captivity of Babylon could in no strain of figure be applied to this, which is called expressly the *second* time of the Lord's stretching forth his hand in their deliverance,

and as decidedly said to be not Israel as a *whole* nation in *one place*, but the *remnant* in *all* places, from the north side of Asia, and from Egypt towards the south; from parts towards the east, and then, lastly, taking in the islands of the sea in the westward of the great Atlantic. Moreover, in addition to these decisive prophecies concerning Israel's recovery, the method of the Lord's leading them to Zion is as expressly pointed out; "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God, they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten," Jer. l. 4, 5. Zechariah hath explained how this is to be wrought in his twelfth chapter and tenth verse. And Ezekiel, when he saith, "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all." Neither of these events hath as yet taken place to Israel as a people, since the dispersion; and consequently they are yet remaining to be fulfilled. And the accession of the gentile church to the Jewish, which is as expressly promised by the concurrent voice of prophecy, when "ten men of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirts of one man that is a Jew," in their return to Jerusalem; when "all nations shall flow unto the mountain of the Lord's house," Zech. viii. 23. Isa. ii. 2. This also forming a most important æra in the history of Israel, plainly proves that the event yet remains unaccomplished; and naturally directs the eye to look with a pleasing expectation for that day when the gracious promise to the Mesiah shall be fulfilled, not only in

"raising up the tribes of Israel, and restoring the preserved of Israel," but in becoming "a light to the gentiles, and God's salvation to the ends of the earth," Isa. xlix. 6. And lastly, to mention no more, this glorious period of divine favour is to be distinguished by an universal and uninterrupted peace and tranquillity, which is to be disturbed no more; "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," Isa. ii. 4.

From all these plain and self-evident prophecies of scripture it is extremely clear, (and we shall find no difficulty in falling in with the popular ideas of our elder brethren in the ancient church of God in the opinion) that the recovery of the Jews and bringing home the dispersed of Israel, is positively promised in the oracles of God; that this great event is to be accomplished in the latter days; that among the auspicious consequences of it, the Gentile church shall be united to the Jewish; and a profound peace shall follow it throughout the whole earth.

From these premises we venture to go on to another conclusion, viz. that (setting aside for the moment all disputes between the Jew and Christian) as our elder brother we cannot but know will gladly hear, we allow with him, at least in part, that those prophecies se lected are unfulfilled; and hence we invite him to attend to the reasons which we shall endeavour to bring before him, why we humbly conceive that the period is ripening for their accomplishment. And may the God of Jacob prepare the minds of his people for what he may be about to prepare for them!

CHARLES.

CHAPTER V.

TO GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE, THE JEWS.

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel; thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and eat them as common things. For there shall be a day that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord, sing ye with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind, and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together, a great company shall return thither."—Jer. xxxi. 3—8.

If we have been happy enough to call up the attention of our elder brethren in the church of God by the former sounding of Zion's Trumpet, we hope that we shall be equally successful in conciliating their affection to what we have farther to propose to them on the same animating subject. Blended as our interests are in whatever belongs to the Messiah's kingdom, our sincerity cannot be questioned, however deficient we may be found in understanding; and while we are able to plead an honesty of intention, we venture to assure ourselves of a candid acceptance.

From the selection which was made in our last address from the scriptures of your own prophets, we are well aware that we fall in with your own popular opinion in the obvious conclusions which those writers form; that there must be a church yet remaining to be established in the earth, into which Israel shall be gathered out of all nations whither they are now scattered. And keeping out of view every controverted point respecting the commencement of the Messiah's reign, we can and do most cheerfully join issue with you in the conviction, that there remains yet to be accomplished a more splendid and glorious manifestation

of this church, into which both Jew and Gentile are to be gathered, that hath ever taken place in any former period. Since the return of Israel from Babylon, there hath been no epoch in the Jewish annals, in which the prediction of the prophet in the motto of our paper, (to notice no other) have been fulfilled. From the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmanezer, in the reign of Hoshea, never have the children of Israel possessed Samaria. The hour therefore is yet to come, when "the planters shall plant their vines on her walls, and eat them as common things."

Assuming it then for a principle perfectly unquestionable, that he that now scattereth Israel will gather him, we hasten, according to our proposal, to assign our reasons, why we humbly conceive the commencement of this glorious æra to be drawing near. We would only desire to premise, that, on a subject unavoidably enveloped in much obscurity, nothing more than the mere outlines and unfinished sketches which time alone can shapen into form, can be expected from us. We venture indeed to hope, that the present moment, advancing as we really think it is towards the dawn of this happy day, will furnish us with sufficient light to discover what in the long night of preceding ages, lay concealed in shade. And, if it be but the smallest gleam opening to our view, it will be both our wisdom and our happiness to improve from it. Should it indeed, under the gracious teachings of heaven, tend only to excite a greater diligence among our elder brethren in the perusal of their scriptures, and a greater spirit of watchfulness and prayer, in proportion as the auspicious period draws nearer, our labour will be amply recompensed; and both the Jewish and Christian churches, gradually approaching towards each other within the sphere of brotherly attraction, unanimously wait the day-dawn and day-star of that happy morning, in which the sun that then riseth will go down no more; but Jehovah himself will be his people's everlasting

light, and the days of their mourning be finished. Isa. lx. 20.

In confirmation of our opinion, that the commencement of the period for Israel's return is drawing nigh, we might bring forward as the first observation, meriting the particular attention of the Jew, the vast lapse of time which hath taken place since the prophecies of their scripture, referring to this event, were written; and more especially, since the spirit of prophecy itself hath ceased among them. We are well convinced, that the argument which might be formed from hence would open a very striking and decisive testimony in favour of our opinion, if the investigation were prosecuted under all that variety of evidence, with which it is surrounded. But, for the reasons before assigned, we can only touch the subject with a very delicate hand. We shall not offend, we hope, (for it is the very farthest from our intention) if we venture very tenderly to ask, whether our elder brethren in the church of God have ever considered with that seriousness which the subject deserves, the long period which hath passed from the termination of their prophetical writings to the present hour, in which according to their belief no prophecy hath been fulfilled, and no new revolution from God hath been afforded? It was three hundred and fifty years* before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian's army, that the holy canon of scripture folded up its sacred deposit with the writings of the last prophet Malachi; and since that awful visitation near eighteen centuries more have run out their annual circuit. Can the seed of Abraham produce any circumstances which carry with them the smallest resemblance to these events in any former annals of their history? Was there ever any period in the church of God in

* The margin of our bibles places the prophecy of Malachi three hundred and ninety-seven years before Christ; and Dr. Prideaux dates it still earlier, in four hundred and twenty-eight before the vulgar æra of christianity.—*See his Connection, part* 1, *page* 568.

which the spirit of prophecy remained so long suspended, or any instances in which every prediction remained so long unfulfilled? But leaving these questions as becoming very solemn and highly interesting inquiries for a retired hour, we lay no stress upon them as giving strength to our argument. It is on evidences more clear and decisive that our opinion is formed. It became proper to introduce our observations with just glancing at the prophecies in this general way. We shall now pass on to the consideration of a remark of a different nature, which we venture to assure ourselves will be more cordially received by our brethren of the Jewish church.

It hath been the favourite practice among the tribes of Israel, upon every new commotion excited in the kingdoms of the world, to encourage the hope that the period of their return to Jerusalem is approaching. The general scope of prophecy, relating to this great event, seemed to intimate, that, when the Israelites should hear of wars and rumours of wars, then they were to expect their redemption to be drawing near. The notion, that the wars of kingdoms would be made instrumental in producing this accomplishment, is certainly well founded on their scripture authority. But had our brethren attended to what their prophets taught respecting it, they would have understood that certain events must be produced in the earth in priority of succession to the fulfilment of their call and restoration. Daniel in a very striking manner declares, that, "before the sanctuary can be cleansed, and the abomination which now maketh desolate, can be taken away," that superstition, whose character, accurately drawn by the prominent feature of disregarding the desire of women; and that imposture, whose situation, "in planting the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the holy mountain," too plainly point to popery and mahometanism to be mistaken, must be done away. These events

must precede the period of Israel's emancipation and their return to Zion. Michael, the great prince, is expressly promised to stand up for the children of his people; but not before that time. There must be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation to that time; but at that time the Lord's people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book, Dan. xii. 1. The peculiar situation of things prevents a fuller explanation of these important scriptures.

Passing it over therefore, we hasten to our third particular, on which as a final and grand argument, we desire to rest our chief confidence. Daniel, in the eighth chapter of his prophecy, comprehends in one period of time the precise number of days, which, according to the well known language of prophecy, mean prophetical years, the whole sum to run out from Israel's return from Babylon, through the intermediate state both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem, to their final recovery and building of their third temple. We conceive this view of the subject to be unanswerably conclusive and satisfactory. And, although, were we permitted to explain one period of this prophet's predictions by another, which according to our christian scriptures, we conclude to be already fulfilled, it would greatly tend to facilitate the point; yet as we are well aware, that our elder brother, the Jew, will not admit this explanation, we wave every other passage in Daniel's prophecies, and desire only to examine this alone, in confirmation of the present object which we have in view. "I heard (says Daniel) one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be

cleansed." Whoever reads this prophecy with the least discernment, must discover, that it involves in its contents two distinct periods, namely, the continuation of the daily sacrifice, and after that ceasing, the transgression of desolation, in the profanation of the sanctuary. Now if we take up the calculation of the former period from Israel's return out of Babylon, (which was probably the time for beginning the computation about the reign of Darius Nothus, the son of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, when the daily sacrifice we may suppose again was observed) it will form an epoch of 490 years to the siege of Jerusalem, when the daily sacrifice ceased, and the image of transgression, which maketh desolate, was put up in the temple. And it can require no great stretch of ingenuity, to form a tolerably clear calculation from thence to the present period, how much of the remaining portion of the two thousand three hundred days remains yet to be fulfilled. We do not proceed farther in our calculation for very obvious reasons, but we shall have said enough to answer every purpose to those who desire to form an opinion concerning it.

We had intended to have followed up Zion's Trumpet in our present number with some few suitable observations, arising from what hath been said. A very interesting, and, properly pursued, a very improving question also, will immediately result from it. "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" What means, what probable instrument or method will be adopted to bring about the recovery of Israel? An inquiry of this nature will form a very suitable conclusion to our address, and become the best practical inference from it. But having exhausted your patience for the present, we reserve it to our next number.

CHARLES.

CHAPTER VI.

TO GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE, THE JEWS.

"By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?"—Amos vii. 2, 5.

Presuming on the kind indulgence shewn to our former addresses on the subject of Israel's restoration, by our elder brethren in the church of God, we venture once more (and only once more) to trespass on their patience upon the same interesting topic. Chiming in, as we have done, with their popular opinion, that "the Lord will again build up Zion, and restore her waste places:" and joining issue with them, as we do most heartily, in earnest wishes, that their return to their favourite Jerusalem may be hastening, "when their watchmen shall see eye to eye upon the walls of Zion;" we feel a growing confidence in every renewed view of the subject, that our labours of love will be affectionately accepted, or at least that we shall not offend where we mean to conciliate.

We have already endeavoured to shew, under several leading particulars, that the hour of this great epoch in the annals of the church, is approaching. But whether our calculations respecting it are well or ill founded, we do not hesitate to declare, that as the welfare of Zion is at the bottom of every dispensation which occupies the Divine mind in the earth; all the events which agitate kingdoms and empires, are ministering to the promotion of this one great purpose. The final establishment of the Lord's church and people, (if we may be allowed the expression,) is the sole cause of all that we behold going on in the earth. God will raise up the remnant of Israel out of her present afflicted and low state. She shall be yet the admiration and praise of all lands. "The gentiles shall see her righteousness, and all kings her glory; and she shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. She shall

be also a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God. She shall be no more termed *forsaken:* neither shall her land any more be termed *desolate;* but she shall be called *Hephzibah,* and her land *Beulah:* for the Lord delighteth in her, and her land shall be married." Wonder not, therefore, that in the view of these sweet and gracious promises of God to his church in affliction, "for Zion's sake we cannot hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake we cannot rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

But when, from contemplating the "glorious things which are spoken in the city of God," and with which the mind is buoyed up in the pleasing prospect of her future splendour, we turn to the view of the ancient church of Israel, and behold her present low and depressed state, the vast disproportion of circumstances naturally awakens the inquiry in the heart, "by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" If it be allowed, (and it must be allowed, however humiliating,) that the day in which we live, is not the day of Israel's grandeur; time was when the "dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel" could not be counted; when "the Lord God was in the midst of them, and the shout of a king among them." But "how hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud, and cast down the beauty of Israel, and swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob!" Contrasting therefore the view of such present humiliation with the assurance of so much future glory; and calculating human probabilities by human standards; the question bursts forth involuntarily from every beholder, and is echoed from every heart, "from whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?"

It is this interesting inquiry that we purpose, in our present and finishing address to our elder brethren, to

pursue. We humbly conceive, that it may well be termed interesting; and we as humbly hope, that under the light of your own scriptures sufficient direction may be discovered to guide us in the way of information respecting it. And we only pray that the Lord God of the prophets, who commissioned the prophet to inquire, may commission the mind of his servants to understand by whom Jacob is to arise, and Zion to be exalted.

And here on our very entrance on the subject, if we reason by analogy, it should seem, that the truest method to form an accurate opinion of the probable means by which the Lord will accomplish his promises respecting the restoration of his people, is to judge from former deliverances. How hath God wrought for Israel in times past, becomes an important question in order to throw light upon the present occasion. Keeping this in view as a way-mark, in exploring the path of Israel from the first moment of their history as a people to the present hour, it will be found that in all the eventful proceedings of deliverance wrought for them, this inscription is uniformly the signature of all: "Not by might, nor by power; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." To go back no farther than their emancipation from Egypt, nothing surely carries with it an higher demonstration, that not by human means, but by divine interposition that deliverance was accomplished. And as in their liberation from Egypt, so in their final settlement in Canaan, every thing proved what one of your own writers hath recorded for perpetual observation, that "they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them; but the Lord's right hand, and his arm, and the light of his countenance." In the rescue from Babylon, the point of God's immediate interference is, if possible, yet more strikingly displayed. The Lord had taught his people, (by the ministry of one of the

prophets,*) to expect this deliverance for more than two hundred years before it was to be accomplished; nay, for more than half that period, before the captivity of the Lord's people was to take place. When therefore we are told, that "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, who made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, that the people of Israel should go up to Jerusalem, and rebuild the house of the Lord which was thrown down;" who doth not see in all this the confirmation of the same leading character, that "he who hath made Israel hath redeemed him?" But what we would desire principally to be remarked in all these instances, is the open display of the divine arm in the accomplishment. In the case of Israel's emancipation from Egypt, it is true, God was pleased to make use of human means, as instruments in his Almighty hand; and in the characters of Moses and Aaron, he appointed ministers to go before his people. But to shew the incompetency of accomplishing such magnificent purposes by any subordinate instrument whatever, the miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea, the effects of God's immediate agency, to mention no more, are sufficient in point. And in the case of Israel's return from Babylon, to throw down at once every idea of any human co-operation, for the purpose of emancipating them from the power of king Cyrus, we are expressly taught that the Lord put it into the heart of Cyrus himself to let the people go free. From this view of things in Israel's history in former periods, we consider it as a very fair inference to observe, that however the Lord disposes causes and events in the world at large, to forward and promote the great designs of his church and people, it is "his own arm which brings salvation, and of the people there is none with him;" or, to use the strong expression of the prophet we before quoted,

* Compare Isaiah xlv. with Ezra i.

it is "not by might, nor by power; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Making this the basis of our observations on this interesting inquiry, "by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" we venture to go on to another remark, which, in the present low estate of Israel, if it be well founded, should seem to be in a particular manner consolatory; namely, that as in all former instances, (comparatively speaking,) the Lord hath reserved to himself the efficient ministry of working deliverance for his people, without calling in much intervention of human instruments, we conclude that so it will be now; but "the Redeemer himself shall come in Zion, (that is, by the power of his Holy Spirit,) "and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord," (Isa. lix. 20.) When the glorious period is arrived of Jacob's restoration, the power by which it is accomplished must be commensurate to the work; and how inadequate to the attainment of such an end all second causes must ever prove, cannot be difficult to discover. Moreover, the present dispersed state of the Jews, scattered as they are over the face of the globe, (humanly speaking,) precludes the use of any instruments for their general restoration. It is not impossible, (as hath been supposed,) that some of the dispersed of Judah are in places with which Europeans have no commerce, perhaps no knowledge. And if so, by what human means shall the foundation be laid for Israel's recovery? Add to this, it is said by an authority to which the Jewish as well as the Christian church gives implicit obedience, that the period for uniting both in one fold is precise and stated; Daniel's two thousand three hundred days limits the time to a precise point; and we know also that "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west," so will be his coming who is "to turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" and, consequently, it will not be accomplished by a gradual ingathering,

which must be the case, if by human instruments the Lord had intended to call home his people? And what is still more, when the prophet Zachariah, (in allusion, as we must hope, to this event, because it hath never been fulfilled in any other,) declares that "many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord:" and that "ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you of a truth;" doth not this evidently imply, that the conversion of the Jews is to be the instrument in the Lord's hands for the conversion of many gentiles, and not that gentile nations are to be made instruments for the recovery of God's "ancient people the Jews?" Supposing therefore that God in his providence be graciously pleased, (as in the instance of bringing back his captives from Babylon, he stirred up the mind of Cyrus,) by his blessed Spirit, to stir up the minds of multitudes of his people in one and the same hour, in the different places whither they are now dispersed, and so dispose them with one consent to seek the Lord, directing their steps towards the holy city; and supposing, what may well in such a case be imagined, that under the same predisposing power, the view of their departure shall so arrest the minds of the surrounding people, that they prepare to go with them from such a conviction of the call; in this case their restoration will be accomplished in a way suitable to what we might reasonably expect; the sole glory will be to the Lord; prophecy will receive its consummation; and our scriptures sweetly testify to the experience, that as through the fall of our elder brethren salvation first came to the gentiles, so in the receiving of them again it will be to us as "life from the dead."

We had intended to have prosecuted this inquiry

much farther, and have produced other reasons which seem to co-operate with those we have brought forward in shewing the very high probability that the recovery of Jacob, from his present low estate, will be without any human means in the immediate act of restoration, but wholly from the Lord. But while we say thus much with a view to comfort the minds of our elder brethren in the church, to whom it is particularly addressed, we would not be understood as desiring hereby to discourage the laudable attempts of many of our church and people in their endeavours to hasten on Israel's restoration, by their calls on God's ancient people to this purpose. Far be it from us to mean this; and therefore as far let it be from others in supposing it. If their souls desire "the first ripe cluster," we would pray that "the new wine may be found in it." But while we wish to all such "good luck in the name of the Lord," we hope we shall be forgiven for thinking that such attempts are like the forced vegetation of the hot-house. We cannot by our burning glasses give the fruit its genuine sweetness and ripeness. No act of man can accelerate the crisis of the fever, or produce the maturity of the smallest pimple. The Lord hath said, "his people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever. And the Lord will hasten it in his time." In his time may his Holy Spirit direct us to wait its accomplishment, and may he mercifully be pleased to bring forward so glorious an event in his own way.

We cannot dismiss this address to our elder brother without observing, that whatever conclusions he may be pleased to draw from it, he will, (we hope,) think with us, that there is enough said to call up his most earnest attention. And if we have been so successful as to engage it, the object we proposed to ourselves will be answered. It cannot but strike him, how that

attention ought to be exercised, viz. in a diligent perusal of your own scriptures; in a just calculation of the terms made use of in the scriptures of the prophets, respecting the unfulfilled promises; and by devout prayer and supplication to remind God of his promises, and as patiently to wait the accomplishment of them. It is among the sweetest commendations of Daniel, that he was "a man greatly beloved;" and, among the highest instances of divine favour, that a special messenger from heaven was sent to him, "to shew him what should befall his people in the latter days." And the situation in which that messenger found him, serves to manifest what it is that is pleasing in the sight of God. He tells us that when he had understood by books the number of years destined to the desolations of Jerusalem, "he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."

Brethren, adieu! may it be the daily prayer of Israel, that "the Lord would look upon Zion, the city of their holy solemnities:" for the Lord hath said, that "thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. For the Lord will be our Judge; the Lord will be our Lawgiver; the Lord will be our King: he will save us." (Isaiah xxxiii. 20, 21, 22.)

CHARLES.

CHAPTER VII.

TO ALL THAT LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, IN SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."—Heb. x. 23, 24.

It is one of the most distinguishing characters of the Lord's people, in times of prevailing corruption, to stand aloof from the vain pursuits of the world around them; and carry with them in the ordinary walks of life, as well as in the more hallowed seasons of worship, some peculiar testimony, to manifest whose they are, and to whom they belong. The prophet Malachi, in his sweet manner of description, pencils one trait of character in the Lord's people, and connects with it, a gracious promise of God, which at once shews the great importance of it in the divine eye, and the assurance it carries with it of the divine favour. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," Mal. iii. 16, 17. And it is an observation well worthy to be made, after reading the quotation from this prophet, to connect with it the relation of the apostle, that it was in an employment of this kind the Redeemer found the disciples in their walk to Emmaus, when he talked with them by the way, and when he opened to them the scriptures.

In the present sounding of our Zion's trumpet, the object we propose to ourselves from it, is very earnestly

and very affectionately to recommend a conduct of this nature. That professors of the gospel of Christ, and even many possessors of vital godliness, are much gone back from this open manifestation of religious principles, will not, we imagine, be denied. Whither shall we direct our search in the present day, to find such a family as Moses hath described, of a father encircled by his little household, and speaking to them of the great things of God, when "sitting in the house and walking by the way, when lying down and rising up?" (Deut. xi. 19.) And to what city, town, or village, shall we now look, to discover a similar practice to that of the apostles, who not only daily in the temple, "but from house to house," ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ? (Acts v. 42.) And is the object lessened in its importance since the days of our fathers? Or is the pure gospel of the Lord become less interesting now, than it was then? The apostle, it is evident, thought otherwise from the scripture we have chosen for our motto: he considered (as all gracious minds cannot but consider) it a growing principle, and every hour increasing in its importance, that as we see the day approaching, we are to exhort one another the more, and to assemble ourselves the more together. And if the Lord's people are indeed in earnest in their profession; if their own eternal welfare, and the welfare of perishing sinners around them, do indeed occupy a serious concern; if they are really at prayer, that God would cause a little revival in their bondage, and once more shine with his presence and his power, upon our guilty land, what might we not hope would result, under the divine blessing, from the united efforts of the Lord's people, scattered (as we trust they are,) in all the departments of the state, from the highest to the lowest, and shining as sparks among the stubble: if

magistrates, ministers, and people, would put their shoulder to the work, and carry with them into active life in all their societies, as well as in the house of prayer, that impression, that "they had been with Jesus." In this case every parlour would echo back the language of the church, and the walls of every household would vibrate with the adorable name of the Lord Jesus. The magistrate's sword would then never *be borne in vain*, nor the minister's presence ever be found discouraging. The card table, and the midnight assembly, would then give way to the study of the scriptures of truth; and even the poorer circles of our people, imitating the manners of the great, would convert their uninteresting and sometimes offensive communications, into the sweet and edifying conversation, "which becometh the gospel of Christ." And let any one figure to himself a thousand, and ten thousand families, throughout the kingdom, thus daily occupied; and then ask himself, whether that promise of God would not be fulfilled, and fulfilling among us; "for then will I turn to the people a pure language; that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent," (Zeph. iii. 9.)

CHAPTER VIII.

TO THE MOURNERS IN ZION.

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."—Isaiah lxi. 3.

It was a sweet note which the prophet sung in the church of God, as taught him by the Holy Ghost, when he cried, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, her

iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand, double for all her sins," (Isa. xl. 1, 2.) The Lord well knew, how extremely backward his people were, upon all occasions, to believe in his merciful assurances; and therefore the prophet was commissioned to double the proclamation in the holy mountain, and *again to speak comfortably*, that the charming sound might long reverberate. And though the softest whispers of grace strike with a peculiar fulness of accent on the listening ear, and are considered as very precious things by the Lord's people; yet here, where so much mercy was to be shewn at once, the Lord commanded, that the loudest outcry should ring through all his holy mountain; as if to manifest the divine intention, that no poor sinner should remain deaf to the joyful sound, however long he might have had his ears stopped to the voice of mercy through "the hardness and deceitfulness of sin." But what yet rendered this message of God, by his servant the prophet, peculiarly sweet and endearing, and indeed gave it at once the most finished proof of sovereign mercy, was the precious intimation it contained: that it was not merely to tell Jerusalem her sins were pardoned, and that this pardon resulted from the sole effect of the divine pleasure; but to superadd to the transporting declaration this sweet assurance also, that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation was made to reign in a way of righteousness." The merciful Lord foreseeing what doubts, and fears, and misgivings, after all would be for ever arising in the breast of guilt, to damp the ardour of hope, and to call in question the reality of divine blessings, even in the very moment sometimes of feeling their effects, commanded the prophet to assure his people, that he had received an equivalent, had found a ransom for their transgressions. For in the person of Zion's Redeemer, "who bare her sins in his own body on the tree," and

sustained the punishment due to them, the most ample, nay, more than ample satisfaction had been made, for all her iniquities. "Tell her therefore, (saith your God) that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand, double for all her sins." And although this great event in the Redeemer's ministry, was not then actually accomplished, but was reserved to be completed in what is called "the fulness of time;" yet in his divine eye, to whose infinite comprehension past, present, and future, form but one and the same object, the Lord contemplating what was faithfully promised as intentionally fulfilled, beheld in "the Lamb of God taking away the sins of his people," which was to be done in the ages to come, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" and therefore, in reference to this finished redemption, declared that Jerusalem's sins were pardoned, in a way by which grace still triumphed, and yet his justice was not injured. And hence, by virtue of this, old testament saints, when dying in the faith of expectation, as well as new testament believers, living in the faith of completion, might both be equally included in the merits of this rich salvation. So that in every age, as well before the coming of Christ, as since, whenever humble and contrite believers, felt depression from the burthen of sin, and were unable to look up with any confidence, or lay hold with a fixed assurance of any of the gracious promises of God, simply as promises; this sweet recollection of "grace reigning by righteousness" (as the apostle most strikingly calls it) might bring joy and comfort to the heart, and experimentally explain to the believer, the full meaning of that scripture, which shews how "God might be just, and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.) And it should seem indeed, to be among the precious lessons, which "the Holy Ghost

teacheth in the Lord's school, when commanding his people "to compare spiritual things with spiritual," to intimate that this delightful passage in the prophet Isaiah's writings, was intended to be the direct answer to the mourners in Zion, in all ages, when, like Ezra,* they were groaning under an apprehension of divine displeasure. "Thou, our God, (saith Ezra) hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." No, (saith the Lord) tell Jerusalem that "she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." How sweetly and endearingly doth the gracious Lord commend his love to his people, "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones!"

In all periods of the church, the Lord's people are the same. He hath left indeed in the midst of Zion, according to his promise, "an afflicted and poor people." This is the family feature of all the household. However outward circumstances may vary, in the inward feeling, arising from a knowledge of the plague of their own hearts, their character is the same. It is not, as it concerns "the precious things of the earth, or the fulness thereof, (as Moses elegantly expresses it;) neither for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, or for the precious things put forth by the moon," for which they rejoice or mourn. Sin is the universal burden for which they are peculiarly marked as an afflicted and poor people; and the effects of this in all states will be the same. It was to such characters, the commission by Isaiah was directed, when the Lord de-

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* It is a point of no small importance to the proper interpretation of scripture, to know the period or age of the church in which the several writers have lived. Ezra, though his book is placed before the writings of Isaiah, lived nearly two hundred and fifty years after. They who wish for information on this subject, would do well to consult the 'Youth's Catechism on the Books of Scripture.' Sold by Bulgin and Sheppard, Bristol; Hazard, Bath; and Matthews, London. Price sixpence.

clared that he would have his people comforted. It is to such our trumpet now sounds under the same authority, in the words we have chosen for our motto to this paper: "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

The observations with which we have introduced the subject, on the gracious design of God, in comforting his afflicted people, may serve in some measure, we would hope, under the divine teachings, to answer the more general causes of complaint in the unhallowed sins of nature, for which Zion's mourners go heavily. But we confess, our design at present is to contract the boundary of our remarks, within the horizon of a special and particular branch of that sorrow of the heart, which at times distinguishes more or less all Zion's mourners; we mean what is called "the hidings of God's countenance;" or as it hath been very properly defined, "that misery of the soul which ariseth from divine desertions." It will be indeed to give beauty for ashes, if the blessed Spirit should graciously apply the sweet consolations which arise out of his own most sacred word, to any wounded breast, which may read Zion's trumpet, under this peculiar state of suffering. We shall endeavour therefore to follow up the language of our motto with a few remarks on this subject; very humbly looking up to Him, who is the alone Comforter of his people, to bless our feeble service to his glory, and his people's welfare, that our labour of love may not be "in vain in the Lord."

We would enter upon the ground of consolation, with particularly requesting all true mourners in Zion, who pine under the absence of their Lord, to make this important distinction, which of itself becomes in the season of affliction more than half the cure; we

mean between the loss of his *refreshing presence*, and the loss of his *saving favour*. There is a mighty difference in the two. Precious souls, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot indeed but be perpetually desiring to taste more and more of his graciousness; and consequently the Lord's withdrawings cannot but become sources of anxiety to make them groan. But the true believer should, however, never for a moment forget, that the very desire of the Lord's return is grace, and grace in exercise too. You may for a season be without the sweet *manifestations* of divine love, while the *abiding testimonies* of that love still remain. Though the glorious inhabitant of (what he is pleased most graciously to call) his temple, doth not make his appearance every day, yet the house is still his own, and he certainly dwells within. The sun in the firmament may be hidden by intervening clouds from our view, while yet we cannot but know his place in the heavens from the effects of light, which though not in shining, still appear. Remember what the Lord Jesus himself declared, of his perpetual residence with his people, when once he came among them: "He dwelleth in you, (says Christ) and shall be in you. He shall abide with you for ever." The sensible, soul-refreshing influences may be withheld, but his indwelling grace and presence is perpetual.

We call upon Zion's mourners in the next place to recollect, and consider the "unchangeable love of God" in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. However his expressions may vary, his love is the same. And if the holy mourner, in the moment of despondency, would ask himself the question, what was the inducement at first, for which God set his love upon me? The answer must be, not my merit, not my desert, but his own free grace and unmerited favour. And if nothing but divine love became the first mover, shall not divine

love be the everlasting cause to the end? Oh! what sure work the soul makes of it, when it looks at an unchanging love, an "everlasting covenant, ordered and sure in all things!" It is true, our sins, our shortcomings, grieve the Holy Spirit of our God, and the Lord testifies his displeasure by the momentary withdrawings of the sweet communications of his love. Yet it is equally true, though he hates the sin, and will not, cannot indeed, suffer the least instance of it to go unpunished in his people, still he loves the sinner. There is a blessed *but* in the sweet promise, to all the spiritual seed of David. "Though his children break his law, and keep not his commandments; and though he visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes:" nevertheless his children they still are, though restive, stubborn, wayward and disobedient: *that acts* as a prop, to keep up the otherwise falling cause; *but* his loving-kindness will he not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. And why all this? Purely for the self-same cause that Isaiah had it in command to comfort the Lord's people; because in the person of the Lord's Christ, double punishment had been recompensed for all their sins, however worthless in themselves, they were worthy in the person of the Redeemer. And of him it was graciously predicted, "in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isa. xlv. 25.

We would add another consideration, in order that the mourners in Zion may take "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" and that is, to recollect how many precious evidences the kind Lord is still shewing them in the very midst of all their complainings, during the dark and discouraging hour. Do you not still feel at times strong desires after the person of the Redeemer? And what are those desires, but assurances of the Spirit's work? Do you not see a loveliness in

his person, although you cannot always call him your's? And say, in the deepest trials and greatest gloom, would you give up all your hopes and confidence, and return into the world? You know you would not, for the universe, relinquish the former; and for the latter, you find that to be impossible. And is it not evident then, that there must be the faith of *adherence*, even when you cannot behold the least marks of the faith of *evidence?*

And lastly, to add no more—if all these arguments fail, there is one at hand, which, if rightly considered, becomes sufficient to dry up every tear, and suppress every sigh during the season of the Lord's hidings—I mean the example of the Lord Jesus, in his unequalled sufferings, arising from his Father's desertion on the cross. Infinitely beyond our grasp of knowledge to comprehend the causes of this mysterious subject, as it must ever appear to our view, yet the practical uses to be drawn from it are very obvious: for it proves, that if God forsook his beloved Son in such a season, the dearest, and best of his people may be forsaken for a time also. And if, as is very plain, the Lord Jesus was never dearer to his Father, than in that moment when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" it will follow, that the Lord's people may be more immediately the objects of his tenderest affection, when they are groaning under an apprehension that God hath forgotten to be gracious, and is shutting up his loving-kindness in displeasure, than when all things seem gay and smiling around. The dear Lord withdraws for a little space to make his believing people more sensible of his value; and, as he said to the church of old, so he says now to every precious individual of it; "for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but

with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer," Isa. liv. 7, 8.

We cannot perhaps better close our observations on this subject, than in the words of an author, who hath written more extensively upon the particular branch of it now in view, than our limits will admit.* 'Though I conceive (says he) such arguments ought to reconcile every true believer to the most trying moments of darkness, when once convinced that the Lord hath begun the work of grace in the soul; yet I know full well such is the state of the human mind, that the highest faith is not proof against all the various stratagems by which the enemy enters in at that traiterous gate which is in every man's heart. Methinks I hear you say, even while I am writing, is it possible that a work of grace is begun in my heart, when I find so much corruption lurking under my best actions? Could I live at such a distance from the Lord, as I find by woful experience I do, if the Lord possessed the first place in my esteem? Could I be so dead and indifferent to things eternal, if things temporal had not the ascendancy over me? Can such a state be consistent with a life of grace? Yes! Such complaints are as old as the church of the Lord Jesus itself. They have been the uniform language of all his people time immemorial, and renewed from age to age. And were you capable, in the seasons when they are most oppressive, to analyze them, you would perceive how in a great measure they refute themselves. Could you complain of *corruption* still remaining in you, if your heart was wholly obdurate? Could you lament the distance at which you live from God, if your desires were not awakened after greater closeness of communion? Could you mourn over a worldly-

* See a work, entitled, 'Paraclesis.'

minded heart, if that heart really found its chief pleasures from the world? Do you not observe, in the very principles of the complaints themselves, that they are your greatest burden and distress? Let me beg of you only to be just both to the Lord and yourself, in a proper estimate of things as they really are; and you will then find that the distressed heart, like the jaundiced eye, viewing things through false mediums, gives a colour to the several objects it beholds, which doth not belong to them, but is in fact in itself. Away then, I charge you, with all your unbelieving fears; and bring no more objections against the precious promises of the Lord's unchanging love to his people. Rather assume the confidence of the wife of Manoah, and say, in language like her's, but with much greater cause of assurance, founded on better promises; "if the Lord had meant to destroy us, never would he have shewn us such things, and things which accompany salvation."'

CHARLES.

A SERMON

WITH

SEVEN PRE-ORDIUMS.

SERMON I.

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."—Heb. iv. 14.

Among the many interesting subjects which God the Holy Ghost is graciously pleased to propose to the Lord's people for their instruction and comfort, there is none more sweet and interesting than that which opens to our view the Son of God passing through his ministry and offices in the great work of redemption, from his incarnation to his return to glory. Those precious souls who are following the Lord in the regeneration, cannot but take great pleasure in prosecuting the delightful subject; and having beheld him with the eye of faith leaving the glory which he had with the Father before all worlds, when he came into the world to seek and save the lost, trace his steps through all the process of his love, till they have followed him in his ascension and return to glory, and behold him lodged again in the eternal bosom of the Father.

The subject indeed is opened to us in the word of God, gradually unfolding itself from the very first moment of the promise given of his coming, in the garden of Eden, until completed in the hour when Jesus came and tabernacled among us. And we can, and do, very plainly trace the person of the Redeemer in the frequent assumption of our nature, in those many appearances by which he manifested himself to his people of old, under an human form, before that fulness of time came when he entered on his public ministry. According to what he saith of himself in the description of his person, under the figure of wis-

dom. "I was set up from everlasting; from the beginning, or ever the earth was; before the mountains were settled, before the hills were brought forth. Then I was rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Anticipating as it were the long-wished for moment, when he should accomplish eternal redemption for his people. So that under the teachings of God the Holy Ghost we may trace the eventful history of the Redeemer through every period in his ministry, whether beginning at Moses, or the prophets, or the Psalms; for in all the scriptures the things there mentioned are concerning him.

And as this subject becomes of all others the most interesting, so is it also the most important and engaging which can be, to every serious and truly awakened believer. The blessed Spirit no less consults our pleasure than our profit in proposing it to our meditation, and opening it to our apprehension as far as is necessary in the present state of things to be known. And I venture to persuade myself that all the faithful in Christ Jesus cannot but take particular delight in attending to whatever concerns the beloved object of their souls.

The apostle in the text endeavours to call up the mind of true believers to this contemplation; and proposes such a view of the Redeemer as is at once both rapturous and full of consolation. He knew full well how infinitely interesting it was at all times, both for the comfort and edification of the people of God, to hold up the Lord Jesus to their view in his mediatorial character; and therefore, in the verse I have just read to you, points to him in all the glories of his person, as triumphantly passing through the heavens to the possession of his kingdom. And having first led you to contemplate the dignity of his character, then prompts you to draw that conclusion from it in which his be-

lieving people are all interested. "Seeing, (says he) that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Thus opening the sweetest views of the Saviour that can be conceived. It was not enough with the apostle to convince the soul of Christ's grace and power, but that that grace and power were always to be called forth in exercise for his people: that what he was upon earth he was for them; and what he is now in glory he is for them also. When he came on earth it was for *us*. For *us*, says the prophet, a child is borr, for *us* a Son is given. When he died on the cross it was, as an apostle tells us, the just for the unjust, to bring *us* to God. And as he died for our sins, so when he arose again it was for *our* justification. And in like manner when he returned to glory, we are expressly assured, that it was to appear in the presence of God for *us*. Such views of the Redeemer become peculiarly sweet and refreshing, because they bring him home to our hearts, as one in whose person and offices we find ourselves interested. "Hence (says the apostle) seeing that we have such an High Priest, let us hold fast our profession;" hold fast our confidence in him. Recollect at all times *who it is* that is so graciously attentive to all the wants and interests of his people, and hath given such evidences of his love towards them; and recollect also, *where he is*, and that all power is given to him, both in heaven and earth, and therefore hold fast your dependence upon him, both in the assurance of his ability, and the gracious promises that this ability shall be exerted for his church and people in all their wants, and trials, and difficulties, and discouragements. "Seeing that we have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

My design from this passage, as the Lord shall be pleased to enable me, is to follow up the words and

doctrine of the apostle, in leading your minds to the same pleasing and profitable meditation.

I cannot conceive any subject to be more interesting, or any more suited to the wants of a congregation. It must be peculiarly so to those who know that they have an interest in Christ, and while they look up to the great High Priest, can contemplate him as appearing in the presence of God for *them*. And while this view of the subject becomes thus generally useful, it hath no less separate and distinct comforts, according to the various situations and wants with which gracious souls are exercised in their passage through this world to another. To the poor, distressed, and burthened sinner, who feels the weight, and groans under the load of sin; the view of that sin-bearing Lamb of God who stands in the midst of the throne with the very marks of redemption on his body, cannot but bring comfort and support to the mind. And to the soul that is unable to pray, or even to lift up his eyes to the mercy-seat, the recollection of this great High Priest of our unchangeable priesthood who is gone into the heavens, and there appearing as Aaron of old did, with the names of his people before God, must give encouragement to draw nigh through such a Mediator. Neither are there any under the hidings of God's countenance, the sorrows of the heart, the buffetings of the enemy, or the frowns of the world, but will find this to be the great spring of consolation, that there is one before the throne of grace, whom the Father heareth always, and whose atoning merit pleads for them when they cannot plead for themselves. Nay even the unawakened and the ungodly ought to feel an interest in our subject, for however unconscious they are of it, to the prevailing efficacy of his death and merits, it is that they are preserved under the patience and long-suffering of God.

I shall make it my business, therefore, in the present

discourse, to bring this interesting doctrine before you, by proving, in the first place, the truth of what the apostle asserts, " that we have a High Priest passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." And then, secondly, point out the sweet effects arising out of this most comfortable persuasion. And may he who is now exalted at the right hand of power, and knows the various wants of his people, so bless our review of it to our hearts by his Holy Spirit, that we may from henceforth be enabled to come with more boldness to a throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.

I am then, according to my proposal, to prove to you, in the first place, that what the apostle asserts is true, " Jesus the Son of God is passed into the heavens, and is become our High Priest with the Father."

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see page 671.]

SERMON I.

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—Dan. vii. 13, 14.

There is nothing more satisfactory to the mind of man, in respect to divine truths, than when comparing spiritual things with spiritual, we find one part of the sacred volume explained by another. And this is what the apostle Paul means, when after speaking of the natural man as not receiving the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him, and that "he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned;" immediately adds, but "he that is spiritual judgeth all things." There must be a divine light to discover a divine truth. The natural eye is not competent to any more than natural objects; whereas spiritual sight is necessary to the apprehension of spiritual things. Without the eye of the understanding is opened by the Spirit of the Lord, there can be no perception of divine truths. Hence the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, prays God to "give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards those that believe." And from the same divine source into which the apostle referred all his knowledge, he decidedly asserts the whole of it to have originated in the teachings of God

the Holy Ghost. "God (says he) hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Now, says the apostle, "we have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Taking this maxim of the apostle for our standard, and comparing, under the light of the divine teaching, one part of God's word with another, we venture to believe that the visions of the night, which the prophet speaks of in the text, is explained to us at large by the several evangelists in the gospel, respecting the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I saw, (says the prophet,) in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and a glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. What the prophet saw in a vision, and which he was commissioned to inform the church of, under the spirit of prophecy, was accomplished in reality, when the Lord Jesus ascended up to the highest heavens, that "he might fill all things." He is called, in the prophet's vision, "one like the Son of man;" and Jesus was actually made in "likeness and found in fashion as a man;" and that no shadow of a doubt might arise to whom the authority given of a dominion, and kingdom, and glory referred, our Lord himself declared, in the days of his flesh, that the authority given to him to execute judgment, was ex-

pressly on this account, "because he is the Son of man." And when in the vision Daniel saw him coming in the clouds to the Ancient of days, nothing could more fully express the triumphal ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven, when he went up gradually before the eyes of his astonished disciples, until that a cloud received him out of their sight. And had we not the authority of an apostle for it, we might still have concluded coming to the Ancient of days implied the return of Christ to his Father. For St. Paul says, "He is gone to appear in the presence of God for us." "I go (says Christ himself) to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God." And then was fulfilled that memorable prophecy of scripture also, wherein God the Father proposed to give the Son "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Set thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. All power is given to me, (says Christ himself, when he sent forth his disciples to evangelize the nations) all power is given to me in heaven and in earth." And lastly, as a conclusive and unanswerable proof that this vision of the night, manifested to the prophet, had a reference to the ascension of the Lord Jesus, and could not refer to his second coming to judgment, the terms of expression made use of, fully prove; for the prophet says, that this dominion, and kingdom, and glory given to him, was that all nations and languages should serve him; whereas, when he comes to be the Judge of quick and dead, it is not to receive subjection as much as to award eternal retribution. "He will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." The fidelity of his servants is then to be regarded, and the disobedience of the rebellious punished. So that without doubt it is to the Lord Jesus's ascension, this dominion and kingdom must refer. "All power was then given to him over all flesh," that "to him every

knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Assuming this for granted that the passage I have read to you from the prophetical writings had a positive reference to the great doctrine of the ascension, my intention is to consider it in this point of view, for our present meditation and improvement. It cannot but become a very gratifying consideration to every true believer in Christ, to behold the long and great apparatus with which the gospel was introduced, and the several leading points shadowed out in reference to the coming Saviour. To observe the prophets all predicting in their several prophecies somewhat of the Redeemer which was for to come, as well as the evangelists in the ages after his advent, declaring the facts of his being come; and both concurring together in testimony to one and the same glorious attestation of the truth as it is in Jesus.

In following up the doctrine of the prophet's vision realized in the ascension of the Lord Jesus, I shall first prove to you the certainty that this Son of man which Daniel saw, and which I have already made appear meant the Lord Jesus, after he had finished transgression, and made an end of sin by his one offering on the cross, did ascend to the highest heavens, there to appear before the Ancient of days for his people. And then, secondly, I shall call upon you to observe with me, the practical effects arising out of the doctrine. And may he, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, so confirm the doctrine to our hearts' experience, that we may know that his is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

My first object is to prove to you that what Daniel saw of the Son of man ascending to the Ancient of days, was fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus, when he ascended up to heaven, and returned to the bosom of the Father.

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see page 671.]

SERMON I.

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel on the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually."—Exod. xxviii. 29.

It is a very pleasing consideration to the serious mind, in his attention to divine things, to see how much of Christ was preached in type and figure, to the church of God in the wilderness. Moses to whom the Lord revealed the outlines of redemption, received a positive command to do all things according to the pattern shewed him in the mount. And that no possible misapprehension might arise, to render questionable to what these things referred, the apostle to the Hebrews tells us, that the law was a shadow of good things to come, but the substance was Christ,

When therefore we read, as in the text, that Aaron, the high priest of that church, was commanded to appear in his priestly vestments, with the names of the children of Israel on his breast, when he went in unto the holy place before the Lord ; and when you find this explained by the apostle in reference to Christ, nothing can more decidedly prove the agreement and conformity. "Christ (says the apostle) is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us." In opening the scriptures of God, and explaining the old testament by the new, we can very plainly trace, that the former ministered wholly to the latter; and as the apostle observes, "the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God."

The reference to the person and offices of Christ, in

the exercise of his unchangeable priesthood, after his return to glory, is beautifully represented in the view the texts affords, of Aaron's appearance before God. He entered into the holy place with the names of the tribes of Israel on his breast-plate of judgment. And Jesus, we are told, when he had finished redemption for his people on earth, went into the heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. And as each tribe was particularly named on the breast-plate of Aaron, to signify that none were forgotten before God: so each individual of the Lord's people, with their names and their wants, is carried in by our Almighty Aaron, before the mercy-seat of the Father. The representation indeed of the earthly high priest, falls indeed, as well it might be supposed, infinitely beneath the heavenly Mediator, as the shadow comes short of the substance; for Aaron entered with the blood of others; but Jesus with his own. He had holiness written on his forehead, for there was none in his heart, when, as the representative of Christ, he bore away the iniquity of his people: but the unspotted holiness of the Son of God not only bears away all the iniquity of his people, but he hath by his own offering of himself once offered, for ever perfected them that are sanctified. The high priest under the Jewish dispensation, could not continue in his office by reason of death: but our High Priest hath an unchangeable priesthood, and ever liveth to make intercession for sinners.

Such is the interesting doctrine contained in the words of the text, and the great truths in reference to salvation arising out of it, become not less so. You feel at times, no doubt, great dejection of spirits in the recollection of sin and corruption: you fear, like the church of old, that your way is hidden from the Lord, and your judgment passed over from your God: you feel what the apostle felt, even in those better moments

when desiring to draw nigh to a throne of grace, that when you would do good, evil is present with you: in such seasons what shall give confidence equal to that of looking up to him who hath borne our sins, carried our sorrows, and is now gone in before the presence of the Father, with the names and wants of all his people.

Perhaps I may be speaking before many a heart who is at this moment bowed down under the pressure of sin, or groaning under sorrow; some under the hidings of God's countenance; or lamenting their coldness to divine things; others fearing they shall one day perish by the hand of the enemy.——But one view of our great Aaron in his priestly character, if it please the blessed Spirit to reveal him to the heart, will relieve every situation, and send you home with a new song of thanksgiving, in exchanging the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

My prayer is, that this blessed effect may follow my humble endeavour at this time to point to Christ in his great character, while I shall proceed to illustrate the truth of it, proving in the first place the ascension of Christ, which is the very foundation of the assurance of this great doctrine, that if Christ be risen and ascended at the right hand of power, he is gone in with the names of his people, as a memorial before the Lord continually. And when I have proved the certainty of the doctrine, I shall in the next place go on to shew you the practical effects of it. And may the conviction of it now, and at all times, operate upon our hearts to lead us to a mercy-seat, to find grace to help in this and every time of need.

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see page 671.]

SERMON I.

"Jesus saith unto her, touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God."—John xx. 17.

Mary Magdalene was standing pensive and forlorn, at the door of the sepulchre, on the morning of our Lord's resurrection; while the disciples, who came on the report that Jesus was risen from the dead, to the sepulchre, to see what had happened, had returned again to their own home, as contented no doubt, but unconscious what to think of the event.

While she stood in this melancholy posture, Jesus himself appeared, and convinced her of the reality of his resurrection: and she in the first paroxysm of joy would have rushed into his arms.

The text is the Redeemer's address to her by way of prevention. "Jesus saith unto her, touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." As if he had said—this is not the time for embracing me, as I am not yet ascended to my Father: that season will be hereafter, when I shall have gathered all my believing people to myself, that where I am there they shall be also. But go to my brethren, and for their comfort tell them, that I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.

There is much precious information contained in these words.—Jesus doth not say *our* Father, or *our* God, as though the interest was one and the same; but my Father, by right of an eternal union of nature and essence in the Godhead, and your's by virtue of

adoption and grace. My God in consequence of my human nature, and his appointment of me to the great office of Mediator, and your God both by creation and dominion.

The words thus explained will be found to open a very interesting subject on the doctrine of the ascension, which I shall endeavour to make profitable, by shewing in the first place, the full and unanswerable proofs to the truth of it; and secondly, the sweet effects included in it; and may our exalted Saviour be pleased to afford an assured testimony to the certainty of the doctrine itself, by giving to us at this time of the aids of his Holy Spirit.

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see page 671.]

SERMON I.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—Rom. viii. 34.

The best relief that a soul can find under all defects and heart-straitenings in prayer, is the view of Christ as our intercessor with the Father. Such is the poverty, and weakness, and coldness, and indisposition of the mind in our most holy things, that we have to lament at all times of our short-comings in seasons of worship. Like the apostle, the best of believers find, but too often, that when they would do good, evil is present with them.

The apostle proposeth, in the verse I have just read to you, a most effectual remedy to all difficulties and discouragements of this kind. He challengeth all creation to oppose the believer's comfort, for he sets aside at one view, every thing that can possibly tend to cast down the soul.—He beholds Christ's death as an eternal answer to all the condemning sentence of the law, and his intercession as a never-failing security for every blessing included in it.—"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

I shall be doing no unacceptable service to any distressed mind present, if the Lord should be graciously pleased to help me in the execution, in placing this doctrine in that point of view as to afford relief to all heart-straitenings in seasons of prayer. And as the foundation of this comfortable doctrine is in the assur-

ance of Christ being at the right hand of God making intercession for his people, I shall first make it my business to prove the certainty of it, that Jesus the High Priest of our profession, is gone into heaven, and is, as the text expresses it, at the right hand of God.

I shall then secondly, speak of some of those invaluable privileges which result from this persuasion. And my prayers are, that the conviction of this great and delightful truth may induce suitable effects in bringing his people now, and at all times, with confidence to the mercy-seat, through the intercession of Christ.

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see page 671.]

SERMON I.

"Then said the Lord unto me, this gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same."—Ezek. xliv. 2, 3.

So highly interesting is the doctrine of the intercession, that it was thought proper to shadow the outlines of it in the church of God, ages before the Redeemer became incarnate. When man by transgression fell, and was driven out of paradise, he lost that sweet and friendly intercourse with his Maker, which in a state of innocence he enjoyed: from this time, cherubims and a flaming sword was placed at the eastern gate of Eden, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. And since that period there hath been, and indeed there can be, no approach to a mercy-seat but through him and his righteousness, who hath made our peace through the blood of his cross. Intercession work is the peculiar office of Christ alone. "He is the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by him."

The prophet was taught this in one of the holy visions. He is brought by the Spirit to the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary, which looked toward the east, and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me, this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened; and no man shall enter in by it, because the Lord the God hath entered in by it. It is for the prince. Christ is the Lord God of Israel, who hath entered into the holy place. He is the Prince of Peace. He hath made

peace through the blood of his cross, and eternal redemption through his blood. By him only therefore can there be access to the mercy-seat. All other channels are for ever shut.

This is the interesting subject to which the text leads; than which nothing can be more delightful to the view. It is the beholding that medium open by which alone we can approach the mercy-seat; for in the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers.

As this forms the very foundation of all our solemn approaches to the throne of grace, I propose to enter somewhat more largely into the subject; by shewing you in the first place, that in the ascension of the Lord Jesus, the Prince, though the gate is shut to all but him, yet through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. And as this rests on the assurance of Christ's ascension, I shall insist upon the evidences of this doctrine most fully. And secondly, then shew you, the very comfortable reflections which arise out of the doctrine. And may the Lord render the review of this subject profitable to our hearts.

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see page 671.]

SERMON I.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in: who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty: the Lord mighty in battle."—Psalm xxiv. 7, 8.

There can be but little question, that the occasion on which this Psalm was written, was the bringing up the ark of the Lord from the land of the Philistines, and setting it in its place on the holy tabernacle. But as the ark was the symbol of the divine presence, and in a very peculiar manner when considered in reference to the covenant of redemption, it became a most pointed and striking type of Christ. The whole of this representation may with safety be considered figurative and typical of the return of Jesus to the temple of glory, after having obtained redemption for his people. And in this sense it becomes a very beautiful subject, to shew of what importance this triumphal ascension of Christ was considered, that it should be typically represented so many ages before its accomplishment.

David had subdued the enemies of Israel on every side, and a profound peace was established in his kingdom; he conceived therefore that it was time for the ark to return to its original station. Hence it was brought up from the land of the Philistines with all the parade of triumph.

And our spiritual David, after he had subdued all the enemies of our salvation, and had made peace through the blood of his cross, returned to the glory which he had with his Father before all worlds. The everlasting doors, even the gates of heaven, were thrown open to

receive him, and he returned as the King of glory, the Lord mighty in battle.

The object I have in view in the choice of this subject, is to shew you that Christ did return as the King of glory, even the Lord mighty in battle, when he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.

And secondly, I shall point out the very pleasing considerations connected with this doctrine. And may the Lord render our attention to this subject profitable by his grace.

[For the continuation of this Sermon, see next page.]

That the Lord Jesus, after he had finished redemption work upon earth, visibly ascended to heaven in the presence of his disciples, is a fact so well attested and proved, that it justly forms an article, and that a very principal one, in the faith of a christian. And indeed, so important is the perfect conviction of this great truth, that without it, there would have been a deficiency in the whole scheme of salvation. It was as necessary, that the Lord Jesus, as our great High Priest and representative, should appear before God, to plead the merits of his death, and to manifest that the work the Father had given him he had finished; as it was for him to die upon the cross, as a propitiation for the sins of his people. Both were eminently connected in one and the same doctrine, and both became equally important in finishing the great work of redemption. So that when the sacred scriptures assure us that the Lord Jesus, after that he arose from the dead, and had continued upon earth for forty days, occasionally eating and drinking with his disciples, to prove to them the reality of his resurrection, and to instruct them concerning his kingdom; did actually in their presence ascend up to the visible heavens, until a cloud received him out of their sight: all this is no more than what the types and shadows of the law had prefigured, and what the spirit of prophecy had foretold of the Messiah, and which in reality must have been accomplished in order to prove that in the person of Jesus, that long-looked for Messiah, was come, and those scriptures respecting him were fulfilled. And, moreover, it was most essentially necessary, that he who came upon earth to redeem his people, should return to his original glory to manifest the accomplishment of it; and as he had assumed the nature of man, and united it to the Godhead, that he should carry up that nature to heaven in the great character of our Mediator, there to appear as such in the presence of God for us.

This is the interesting doctrine to which your attention is now to be directed; and blessed be God, the proofs of its reality are as competent and satisfactory as the most scrupulous mind can possibly desire.

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1. It is attested to us by those who were present at the glorious manifestation of Christ's ascension. The disciples of Jesus saw all the circumstances attending it, and therefore they were of all men best qualified to report it to others: "that (says one of them,) which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you."

Neither was it altogether an unexpected event; for though it is confessed that they had no apprehension at the time, how their Lord would return, or when and where it would take place, no more than they had before his resurrection, what the resurrection from the dead should mean; yet as Jesus had expressly discoursed with them upon the subject in many conversations before, it cannot be said that they were altogether unapprized of it. "I go my way (says Christ,) to him that has sent me, and none of you asketh whither goest thou. A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again I leave the world, and go to the Father." And that no possible misapprehension might arise from these intimations, Jesus expressly adds: "These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."

Having thus prepared their minds for the right apprehension of the scriptures concerning it, when the moment arrived for his return to glory, he led his disciples out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his

hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, that while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. So that every sense capable of receiving confirmation to the truth of the doctrine, was called into the testimony of it. And they who had eat and drank with Christ after he arose from the dead, were certainly most competent to be the witnesses of these things, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

2. Neither were human witnesses the whole of the attestations to this glorious event. As angels attended to grace the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, so the same heavenly witnesses were present to join in the train of his triumphal return to glory. For while the disciples were absorbed in the contemplation of what they saw, we are told that two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, "ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."

3. But we ascend to higher testimonies than even the concurrent assurance of men and angels, when we produce the evidence of the blessed Spirit of God, who graciously confirmed the truth of the ascension of the Lord Jesus by the part he bore in this glorious transaction. St. Paul, speaking of the great mystery of godliness, says, "that Christ was justified in the Spirit;" that is, by his triumph over death and the grave, the Holy Spirit justified Christ as the sinner's surety; plainly proving thereby that the debt of sin was paid, and that by virtue of it Jesus was liberated from the prison of the grave. Whereof, says the apostle, God hath given assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead. The Lord Jesus was justified in the Spirit by this very act of his Godhead. And hence it was that Christ told his disciples, that when the Spirit

was come, whom he would send to them from the Father, among other blessed effects of his mission, one should be to "convince the world of righteousness, because (says Christ,) I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." Which is as much as to say: 'By my returning to my Father, and fulfilling my promise to you of sending the Holy Ghost, it shall convince you that my righteousness and death hath been accepted as complete, for the justification of my people: the whole work of redemption which I came into the world to perform is finished. And it is doubly proved to your apprehension; in the first place, by my sending to you the Holy Ghost, which I could not send were I not ascended to my Father; and secondly, in my remaining with my Father in glory, and ye see me no more, which neither could have been admitted had I not finished the work my Father gave me to do.' This view of our subject is particularly striking, and I beg it may be attended to in proportion to its weighty importance. That it operated with peculiar strength in the mind of St. Paul, is evident from hence; that in his epistle to the Hebrews, when speaking of the sacrificial merits and death of Christ, he adds, "that after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. For by that one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

4. There is one testimony more on the subject which must not be overlooked, because it is of so much importance in the argument, and which I venture to think is complete and unanswerable; I mean the personal assurance which all true believers in Christ possess in the blessed Spirit's teaching them the great truths of the gospel.

The Lord Jesus expressly told his disciples in that memorable conversation he had with them before his sufferings and death, that it was expedient for them

that he should go away; "for if I go not away (says Christ) the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send him unto you." And we read elsewhere, in the same gospel, that the Holy Ghost was not then given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Hence it must follow, that in every single instance of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the gifts of the blessed Spirit, which have taken place in the church of Christ since his ascension; this becomes a most decided evidence that Jesus is ascended, because the Holy Ghost is descended; and that Christ is glorified, for the Holy Ghost hath been given. And this state of the argument is so plain and palpable, and it is also so happily calculated for popular apprehension, that I must insist upon it, (and indeed insist upon it with that strength of conviction the authority warrants) that in the present day, as well as in the ages that are past, every instance we behold of those blessed effects on the mind of any individual, carries with it an evidence perfectly irresistible. Christ declared to his disciples that if he went away he would send to them the Holy Ghost: and he not only promised to send him, but he taught them how they should know him by his offices. "When he is come (says Christ) he shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Hence, therefore, is it not a plain matter of fact, in the private personal experience of every real christian, whose heart is reproved of sin, in being taught the state of his soul as it stands before God, and who hath learnt the righteousness of Christ, in believing that it is an all-sufficient righteousness for salvation, and to whose mind Christ is brought home under all his divine offices, and formed the hope of glory: is it not plain that the knowledge of these great truths must have arisen from the teach-

ing of the blessed Spirit, because it could have originated from no other source? And of consequence therefore it will follow, that every man who hath this testimony in him doth not build his belief of the doctrine upon any historical or hearsay evidence, but derives it from an higher cause, and what the apostle calls the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit. He may therefore humbly adopt this language, and say, I know that Christ is ascended, because the blessed Spirit is descended: God the Father hath accepted his great sacrifice for sin, and in confirmation of it, hath given those ascension gifts which were to follow. Therefore, Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which I now see and hear. My belief of this great article of the christian faith doth not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

I hope these testimonies will prove abundantly convincing and satisfactory, in proof of the doctrine which I proposed to discuss under the first branch of my doctrine.

I shall proceed now to the second object I had in view, namely, the practical effects arising out of it.

And here the first practical improvement arising out of the doctrine of the ascension of Christ, is the conviction it carries with it, that redemption-work is finished; for never would the Lord Jesus have been received into heaven if the salvation he came to accomplish on earth had not been completed: never could he have sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject unto him, if he had not finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.

While, therefore, you contemplate the Lord Jesus as

returning to his glory, forget not to connect with it this most comfortable assurance, that he had then finished the work which the Father gave him to do; and having obtained eternal redemption by his death, he is gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. So that while with the *eye of faith* you behold him sitting in the midst of the throne, with the *ear of faith,* you may no less hear that voice which saith, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Amidst all the discouragements which arise within our hearts by reason of sin, or from without by reason of temptation; this assurance that redemption work is finished, becomes as an anchor to the soul, both sure and stedfast. A sight of our great Advocate at the Father's right hand, in the manner the beloved apostle saw him, as a Lamb that had been slain, is enough to prop up the soul of every true believer under every burthen. For he connects with the view of this consideration, that if Jesus be there, he is there as the sinner's security. He hath purchased redemption with his blood, and being so well received by the Father, it becomes the most decisive testimony that the salvation he hath wrought is well-pleasing in his sight. And hence, therefore, the interests both of Christ's church and his people are eternally secure. The body can never sink while the head is above the water—neither can the church of Christ be destroyed, while the divine Founder of it for ever lives to defend it.

Shall not this comfort every individual of the church of Christ, whatever his own personal straits and discouragements may be? Hath the Lord Jesus indeed finished redemption, and found acceptance with the Father, and that for his people, and can you fear that after such an evidence of his acceptance, he will reject you if you belong to him? That is impossible. Before his departure to glory he expressly told his disciples that if he went away he would come again and receive

them to himself, that where he was there they should be also. I only go before (says Christ) to prepare a place for you.

The assurance of this promise had such an effect upon the mind of one of the apostles, that anticipating the blessings to come, as an effect already attained, he contemplates the redeemed of the Lord, as absolutely raised with their exalted head, and sat down together with him in his throne: and under the impulse of it he cries out, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Suffer me to hope, that such a view of the interest we have in the Father's love, and the Redeemer's merit, will act as it is intended, to give a growing confidence in every true believer's heart, amidst every trial, difficulty, and discouragement with which he is assaulted in his passage through this waste and howling wilderness. There can be no need to fear the most furious opposition on earth, while you have so mighty a friend to defend you always in heaven. And while he acts as the great High Priest of our profession, and bears the names and the wants of all his people on his breast before the Father; surely, as the high priest of old represented him, he bears away the iniquity even of our most holy things, and through his righteousness alone his people are accepted before God.

How gratifying and consolatory is this one view alone, even if there were no other, to the heart of all the faithful in Christ Jesus! It is to this, that *all* owe their security in the faith, and their perseverance in grace. From hence the wanderer is restored, the fearful comforted, the weak strengthened, the lost found, and the poor of the flock gathered out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and

dark day. So that under all the vast variety of wants, and the vast variety of dangers with which true believers are exercised through life, the recollection of Christ at the right hand of power becomes the remedy: and in the hour of death, that sweet promise of his gives a full assurance of hope when brought home to the heart, and applied by the Holy Ghost: "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

2. But while the return of Christ to the Father becomes a sure confirmation that redemption work is finished *for* his people, and that it is pleasing in God's sight; let it be the earnest desire of every one to seek another confirmation of it in our own personal experience that it is finished *in* his people: I mean, in the possession of those ascension-gifts of the Holy Ghost, which Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour purposely to bestow.

Among the great objects of our Lord's return to glory, this is spoken of as eminently distinguished in reference to us and to our salvation, that it was to "fill all things;" that out of that fulness which it hath pleased the Father should be in Christ, we might all receive, and grace for grace. Hence the apostle says, "Unto every one of you is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." So that when "he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," it was that he might give, "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors; but all for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." And to the outpouring of this blessed gift on churches, ministers, and individuals, it is, that the people of God are gathered out of an unbelieving world, and made meet partakers with the saints in light.

The interesting question, therefore, to every one

personally for himself considered, is, what do I know of the ascension of Christ by the descent of the blessed Spirit on my heart? Am I for myself convinced that Jesus is now glorified, because in my own instance the Holy Ghost is now given?

The scripture says, and says it with an emphasis which admits of no reply—"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord;" that is, none can call Jesus, Lord, in the real sense of the word, by which the soul acknowledges him for the Lord, "but by the Holy Ghost." For it is his blessed office alone to take of the things of Jesus and shew unto his people. All the effects of grace, and supplication, and repentance in the heart, are wrought by his divine power. When that promise is fulfilled which the Lord delivered by Zachariah, of pouring out a spirit of grace and supplication, then, and not before, the soul is enabled to look to him whom we have pierced, and mourn. All the sweet properties in being turned from darkness to light, having the eye of the understanding enlightened, and the heart inclined to the things of God, and converted from dead works to serve the living and true God; all are the immediate operations of his grace, who alone can take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh.

Shall I entreat you, therefore, to see whether these effects are among the evidences, by which you for yourself know that Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, in having given you repentance and remission of sins.

3. When this preparatory knowledge is accomplished in the heart by the teaching of the blessed Spirit of God, the ascension of Christ opens another improvement, which forms one of the most interesting and extensive subjects within the compass of the gospel; I mean, in the confidence with which a true believer is enabled to come to the mercy-seat in all his wants,

trials, and necessities, through the intercession and righteousness of Christ, to find a grace to help in every time of need.

The view of Jesus as an intercessor with the Father, gives such an holy boldness to all the exercises of prayer and faith, and love and praise, as becomes sufficient, when the grace of the blessed Spirit is in exercise, to counteract all heart-straitenings and coldness in our devotion. It is only because we forget where Christ is, and how he is engaged for his people, when we feel a disinclination to prayer, or are uninterested and lifeless in the performance of it. Only make an application of this soul-encouraging doctrine to all the innumerable cases with which any true believer can be exercised, and you will find how full of relief it is under every one.

"If any man sin, (says the apostle) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." That blessed advocate stops the accusation, both of the conscience and of the enemy, by the unanswerable and ever-prevailing plea of the merit of his blood, and obtains new pardon for all renewed offences.

If any man finds a deadness of spirit in prayer, and heart-straitenings in his approaches to the throne of grace, the recollection of that blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel, gives an holy confidence to the soul in the conviction, that though the soul be not able to speak for itself, yet there is one at the right hand of power whom the Father heareth alway. And under every temptation which Satan and the unbelief of the heart suggests, of being overlooked or forgotten, or our particular trials not noticed by the Lord, this view of Christ on his throne opens a door of the most consolatory nature, from whence we may fetch relief to answer all our necessities. I want a heart to pray; I want faith to believe; I am distressed with wander-

ing thoughts and absent affections when I come before the mercy-seat. The recollection of my short-comings and numerous offences distract me. How are these and the like situations to be remedied? Wholly from the sweet view which the blessed Spirit gives the soul of Christ, as he did of old to the beloved apostle, standing at the altar, having a golden censer, and offering the incense of his merits with the prayers of his people, before the throne. Rev. viii. 3. The most holy things of the most holy men come up, as the church of old is described, in pillars of smoke, Cant. iii. 6. that is, sullied with innumerable perfections, in which there is much smoke, and but little fire. But when perfumed with myrrh and frankincense of the merchant; that is, when cleansed from their impurities by the incense of the Redeemer's merits, they come up on that altar which sanctifieth both gift and giver, and are accepted in the beloved.

Keep this ever in view, I beg of you, in those hallowed seasons, when drawing nigh a mercy-seat. Though you find no heart to pray, nor faith sufficiently lively in exercise to look up, nor even hands to receive the mercies you implore; forget not there is one who is sensibly touched with the feeling of your infirmities; and who was made in all points like as you are, sin only excepted, on purpose that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Though you are not sufficiently affected with a sense of his glory, yet he is thoroughly impressed with a sense of your wants and infirmities. Exalted as he is to the right hand of power, still he retains the feelings of the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Though you fancy yourself below *his* notice, yet he is not above the reach of *your* prayer. All power is his, both in heaven and

in earth; and what he was, and is, and ever will be, as far as relates to the eternal concerns of his church and people, he is for them.

What shall I add, unless it be to beg of him of whom I have been speaking, that he will graciously afford, at this time, a renewed testimony to the truth of the doctrine, by sending down the gifts of his Holy Spirit upon our assembly.

May our risen and exalted Saviour, with whom all power is in heaven and in earth, give to every one of us grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. It is our highest encouragement to hope this blessing, for when he ascended up on high and did lead captivity captive, and received gifts for men, it was for his people; yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Now to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as to Israel's one God, be ascribed, as is most due, equal and undivided praise. Amen.

A DEVOUT SOLDIER:

A SERMON,

Preached before the

NORTH BATTALION OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE MILITIA, ENCAMPED ON RODBOROUGH DOWN, NEAR PLYMOUTH.

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 5, 1781.

*** It has been considered necessary, in order to render the Works of the Reverend Author complete, that the following Sermon should be inserted. It was delivered in the early part of the Doctor's Ministry, and therefore falls very short of that clear display of gospel grace which afterward was so peculiarly conspicuous; and will lead the experienced and judicious christian to admire the wisdom of the great Head of the church, who made this his servant so pre-eminently to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A SERMON.

"A devout soldier."—Acts x. 7.

BEFORE an audience composed wholly of military characters, it will not, I should hope, be deemed an improper subject, if in the few moments allowed me to address you on the score of religion, the purport of my discourse is made to correspond with the line of life of those who hear me, and is particularly directed to point out the great excellence and propriety of "a devout soldier."

It hath long been matter of reproach to the army, that religion is much less regarded by them, than by any other class of people whatever; while the rest of mankind in their several departments reverence its institutes, (so much of it at least, as to acknowledge its expediency in the human breast) the military seem to have forgotten its influence, and banished it from their society. With what truth the remark is founded, is beside my present purpose to determine; but without great limitations indeed, it is impossible that it should even generally be admitted, since it is an indisputable fact, that many illustrious characters are found in the military line, as eminently distinguished for their piety of heart, as the bravery of their lives. But, perhaps, among those who make up the bulk of soldiery, whose time is too much taken up in the intervals of duty with the ease or enjoyment of camp, to attend to matters of a religious tendency, the observation may with greater propriety be allowed. Brought into the army at first, perhaps, with no other ideas than those of giving in to

all the pleasurable pursuits of a martial life, supporting a courageous independency of character, and dreading nothing so much as being thought upon any occasion under the impression of fear, they are naturally led to contract an indifference for every thing sacred, and imbibe a custom to ridicule and contemn pious and devout affections, deeming them the fit refuge only of weak minds, and the sure presages of dastardly spirits. Hence religion appears at once incompatible with the business of the soldier; intrepidity of heart being the pride and distinction of his life, and the supposed summit of perfection in his character; even the religious fear and veneration of the Supreme Being become thoughts too indignant for a manly soul to cherish, implying a submissive fear and concern which the martial spirit ought never to allow. But what an infatuated and senseless delusion this! as if it became the criterion of bravery for a man to oppose himself against God; as if to be great and courageous, he must deny the power that made him, and laugh at that religious homage and veneration which every thing inculcates from a creature to his Creator.

In opposition to this, I mean to point out the great excellence and propriety of the contrary conduct, by shewing how abundantly it contributes to the perfection of any character; that it is, if possible, more essential to the military than to any other class of men, and appears with increased loveliness when beheld in the soldier; giving additional lustre to his arms, placing the most secure barrier on the side of his integrity and honour, adding to natural intrepidity a religious confidence in the hour of danger, and, above all, providing for that sure and solemn event common to human nature.

By devotion, however, let me not be mistaken. I mean not that abject unmanly principle, that fond enthusiastic emotion, or that lifeless, insipid semblance of virtue, too commonly the substitute of it in the world;

but I mean, a steady, generous, masculine piety, at once distinguished from superstitious fear, from unwarrantable fervours, and from a cold insensibility of heart.

It is too lamentable a truth indeed, that in every age the genuine spirit of devotion hath been misconceived and perverted. Mankind, accustoming themselves to contemplate the divine nature by the various ideas they frame of his perfections, the true image of the Deity becomes at length tinctured with the imagination of the mind through which it passeth, and according to that semblance is held forth the object of adoration.

Men of morose, melancholy complexions, for instance, from considering the Almighty in the gloomy view of offended majesty, picture to themselves the benevolent God as an inexorable Being, full of wrath and anger; and therefore approach him with all that religious dread such awakened apprehensions naturally excite.

Others again, upon the very opposite extreme, measuring the attributes of heaven by the standard of mercy only, and glowing with the warmth of ardour in the review of divine goodness, have run into the greatest excess of inflamed devotion, and offered their addresses before the Most High, in one continued strain of rapturous, irrational ecstacies.

Whilst a third class, differing materially from both, uninfluenced either with the fear or love of God Almighty, have so reduced the spirit of piety to a lifeless indifference and neglect, as to retain a total insensibility of heart to all divine impressions; and imagining the Deity satisfied with mankind, when adhering to the rules of virtue only, have concluded, that in the observance of these moral obligations, the whole of religion is comprized.

All these, however, are alike discriminated from that pure, rational devotion which the gospel inculcates, as

essential to perfection and the happiness of life. The man, actuated by its impulse, is neither devout through an abject servility, nor carried into irrational excesses by the warmth of imagination; nor, presuming upon the virtue of his life, doth he arrogate to himself the divine approbation, while withholding the tribute of pious affections; but by an happy medium of conduct, founded both in the fear and love of God Almighty, and the highest regard to moral duties in obedience to divine commands, he exhibits an uniform collected character. His piety to the Supreme Being, founded on this rational plan, is evinced no less by a rational rule of life. The religious adoration he offers to the great Sovereign of the universe, composed of such essential requisites, corresponds to the end and design of its institution, and as it must, by its very nature, be the only worship suited to his present condition, seems worthy the perfection of God to receive, and becoming his creatures to express. This is the devotion I would recommend, as the true, genuine, and substantial piety.

I shall now proceed, as was proposed, to point out by various arguments, with what peculiar force it comes home recommended to the breast of the brave and good soldier.

In the first place, it is the highest and most finishing ornament to a brave mind, the unerring standard and criterion of a great character.

Piety to the Supreme Being is in itself such an embellishment of human nature, in whatever department of life it appears, that it fails not to acquire universal esteem. Wherever we see this the leading principle of conduct, we naturally conclude every thing good and amiable is the consequence; but when it is discovered in the military line, it strikes every beholder with superior reverence and admiration. That natural intrepidity of heart which belongs to the soldier, and distinguishes

him to the notice of the world, is so softened by the influence of religion, that bravery, in fact, is never seen to half the advantage but when beheld in conjunction with this principle. The union of those two capital springs of conduct, presents the possessor of them to our view at once venerable and engaging, and renders him the highest and most complete character in the walk of human life.

Strains of piety flowing from the warrior's lips are doubly animating; the bended knee, or uplifted eye, of the soldier, is a sight which it is impossible to behold unmoved, or without admiration. Indeed the spirit of devotion ever imparts a dignity to the mind, that claims respect from all orders. To witness the prayers of saints, and listen to the addresses of the devoted religious, in sacred haunts of consecrated worship, where the voice of adoration is only heard, is an awakener of tender emotions, exciting a pleasing sensibility in our powers wholly irresistible; but when from the din of war, or silent camp, the soldier's incense ascends in pious fervours to heaven; when, in the field of battle, we see the hero animated with the strength of a devout heart, and looking up with reverence and submission to the great disposer of events, and no less in the peaceful retreat of the tent, pouring forth before the God of Hosts, the same effusions of his breast in gratitude and praise, this surely transcends the utmost picture our ideas can form, calls up the passions with more abundant force, and carries our conception to the highest pitch of admiration and applause.

Religion herself, in fact, seems to feel the superior energy of such oblations. It cannot be supposed indeed that any thing of partiality is really the case; but whether it ariseth from the great inconnection too common in the world, between a military and religious life; or from the little expectations we form of such a conduct from that quarter; whether from the numerous

temptations that abound in the army; or from whatever other cause; yet so it is, that this principle never appears so superlatively excellent as when united to a brave mind, in the person of a devout soldier; religion then completes her conquest, and makes her triumph perfect.

But without this, there can be no real greatness in any character; wherever this principle is deficient, it matters not how signalized soever such an one may appear, there is still something wanting to the completion of the whole; in a circle of personages less eminent than himself, and as devoid of religion also, he may perhaps shine forth with a kind of specious advantage, and possess a sort of negative pre-eminence above his associates; but contrast him for a moment to one distinguished from him in piety and goodness, immediately his glory is eclipsed; like a faint meteor of the night, he shines only in the absence of a brighter luminary; whenever this again appears, all his glare vanisheth, and is extinguished in the superior lustre.

Depend upon it, therefore, the completely formed soldier is he only, who to a natural intrepidity of mind, adds the beauty of holiness; who blends a great heart with a good one; and, while standing unmoved at the view of all human greatness, bows with submissive reverence and devotion before that which is divine: it is such an one only that truly may be said to dignify his profession, and exhibit to the world a perfect character. By possessing such an heart of religious sensibility towards the Divine Being, and acting also with due propriety in every relative office of life, he cannot fail at the same time to acquire the universal esteem of all wise and good men. The amiable and virtuous will regard him with an eye of love and respect, and even the depraved will look up to him with awe and reverence as to a superior being; compelled as it were to give him the tribute of commendation, and acknowledge the

excellence of that religion in him, which they have neither virtue nor sensibility enough to feel in themselves.

In the second place I would remark, that devotion in the breast of a soldier is a principle still more expedient, both to induce those virtues of the heart, which are not merely ornamental but inherent qualities in his profession; and to preserve his honour, that grand basis of all military glory, sacred and unquestionable.

All the amiable endowments of life which are found to dignify human nature, must in an eminent manner be essential to the soldier and the gentleman; all the finer principles of conduct, whether of probity, public spirit, or humanity, are, or ought to be, the genuine characteristics and the very badge of his profession; these in every department form the outlines of the worthy, the brave, and good man.

The honour of a soldier, in a particular manner, must depend upon the observance of those principles; that nice spark of sensibility, which is his very life and soul, and sets all his great exploits in a flame, can indeed originate from no other source; to give this upon all occasions the most polishing distinction, and to preserve it at all times pure and unsullied, must imply a previous attention to those principles of action; integrity of heart, refinement of life and manners, candour and generosity of conduct, and in short every thing that is truly amiable and praiseworthy, must be the habitual practice of him, who wishes to preserve his honour upon every trying emergency sacred and unquestionable. But without the influence of devotion in the heart, as the prime mover of human conduct, it were impossible to have the assurance of always doing right. Honour itself indeed, if unconnected with religion, takes too frequently a fatal tendency; giving wrong ideas of what is right, and determining in favour of those points which evidently run counter to the

higher obligations of duty; it then sets up false standards of propriety, sinks into a degenerating principle, and may ultimately be considered rather the depravation than the ornament of human nature. Whereas true honour is at all times allied to religion, and influenced by the divine laws; for wherever religion is found governing the heart, and regulating life, the man of honour and goodness is there unquestionably great and secure.

That this is the case is evident from the universal opinion of the world; wherever you see this principle acting as the guide of life, you naturally place the greatest confidence in the honour and integrity of the possessor; secured by such a barrier, you think his character above suspicion; he cannot possibly falsify his word, or violate his honour. Nothing perhaps can afford a more convincing proof of the influence of devotion on virtuous dispositions than this; the testimony of mankind in this particular, being such an irrefragable evidence as nothing can refute.

So that however men of superficial character may pride themselves upon the supposed innate good disposition of their minds, and disdain their being actuated with any other principle, than a noble impulse (as they term it) in themselves; yet it is an obvious truth, that devotion is not only the most honourable incentive to every amiable propensity, but the very depending prop, to support and confirm us in the practice of it. By its influence the soul of the pious man becomes in some degree analogous, (if I may presume so to express myself) to the great fountain of all goodness. Contemplating in his hours of devotion the divine attributes, he is led to make the fairest transcript of them in his own breast. From assimilating his mind as much as may be to the nature of those perfections he adores, their vivifying influence becomes imparted to him in every relative concern of life. In cherishing sentiments

of piety and gratitude towards the Supreme Being, the prevalence it hath over all the parts of moral conduct, enters into the acquittal of all duties, and gives the most complete security, and the highest distinction, to every virtue.

In the third place, I would yet further remark, that devotion is still more eminently useful to the soldier, to induce a firmness of mind superior to the alarms of danger, and to beget courage and intrepidity in the hazardous discharge of those duties to which by his profession he is liable.

The soldier whose business calls him to fields of battle, must pass on through all impediments with undaunted resolution. Insensible to all personal danger, at the utmost hazard of his life, nay even at the certainty of losing it, he must continue with an inflexible greatness and bravery, in the discharge of his duty; and in the most perilous situation, never lose sight of the glorious object he hath in view, or of those motives which animate his breast.

But I would seriously ask, from whence, if not from religion, can such a principle proceed? Is human greatness of itself sufficient to warrant this assured intrepidity at all times of danger? Can the mind of man be adequate to all attempts, or superior to every difficulty? Are not the greatest spirits, and the bravest hearts, susceptible of their weaker moments? And may not the soldier of the most approved valour feel a timidity in that season when he most needs the full extent of courage?—Beyond a doubt—the greatest personal bravery, unsupported by religion, is inadequate to the dangers of a military life. In the very hour of enterprize, the least whisper of apprehension from an impious mind, will be sufficient to check its fervour, and stifle its greatest efforts: if qualified by vices from seeking strength in some superior aid, conscience alone will damp all vigour and firmness, and

deaden the spirit of military ardour. The soldier, therefore, who hath lived "as without God in the world," how shall he in such trying moments, commit himself to the care of heaven! Having no protector from above to look up to as a shield to save him, his heart can receive no strength, in being enlivened with gratitude for past mercies, nor warned by any comfortable presages of present or future support.

Whereas bravery founded in devotion, and a reliance on the Almighty, extinguishes every terror that is natural to the mind of man.

It is impossible indeed that true fortitude can proceed from any other source. That greatness of mind which ariseth from a consciousness of well doing, a prepared state for any possible contingency, and a religious confidence in the Supreme disposer of all events, can only merit the appellation of true fortitude. There is, I allow, another species of bravery not unfrequently to be met with in the world, which ariseth wholly from a natural boldness incident to some tempers: but then this being induced by a wrong principle, is never to be depended upon in hazardous moments and real seasons of danger. Such mechanical bravery never made a figure in the day of battle. Nothing, you may be assured, can thoroughly fortify the mind, and induce a steadiness of character in those serious hours, but what ariseth from the continued intercourse which the devout soldier hath preserved with the Supreme Being. And where this is found, the internal consciousness of having an interest with him "who is the God of armies," and an assurance that his divine shield is always spread over the righteous, must impart firmness of mind, and make the good man act with double bravery upon every trying emergency; nay, should every thing conspire to alarm him, and dangers apparently insurmountable to human achievement surround him, yet conscious that no event can possibly happen, but by the appointment

of heaven, his mind is still at ease, and his heart remains steady and unshaken; he passes on with firmness and intrepidity, looking up with submissive acquiescence to every determination that divine providence sees fit, knowing, that if he is to fall in battle, it is but the shorter way to glory. However, therefore, the horrors of war may terrify the irreligious, and unman his heart in that critical season, its greatest fatality to the devout soldier is not alarming; the evil of defeat, or death itself, it is true, may meet him in that day, but glory will be also there, and crown his actions. Surely the secret approbation of a mind thus fortified and supported, cannot fail in the most hazardous hour of conflict, amidst all the rage and fury of battle, to diffuse a serenity over his spirit, and even in his dying moments impart joy. Bravery like this is the highest attainment of human nature; this is a bravery founded on rational rules, and warranted by wisdom.

History hath handed down to us in the annals of our country some striking instances among her generals, of this kind of courage inspired by religion in the most critical periods, which have more immortalized those illustrious leaders than all the victories of their lives. And there can be no doubt but in the present day, there are many who find the same happy effects of a divine confidence for the mind to rest on, in all the hazardous seasons of their duty, to give strength to their arm, and bravery to their heart.

Think not however its influence is limited to superior rank; every devout soldier hath the same claim to the notice of heaven, and the same assurance of countenance and support; God Almighty, we are very confident, regards the humblest offering of the poorest centinel, as much as that of the most illustrious general; and considers the devout wish, or expressive petition of the heart, which inability gives imperfect utterance to in the common soldier, full as emphatic as the more ner-

vous and animated strains of the officer. In his divine eye all are alike the objects of his notice, and equally experience the favours of his protection, not as their station, but as their several deserts recommend them to his regard.

So that through all ranks the influence is the same. To every breast warmed with devotion, a certain strength and elevation of mind are imparted, which absolutely bear them up superior to fear.

In the last place I would remark, that devotion is essential to the soldier, not only to fortify him for any perilous situation to which by his profession he may be exposed, but more especially to prepare him for that last sure and solemn event common to human nature.

Under the foregoing particular, I hope very satisfactorily was proved, the mighty influence of devotion to the breast of a soldier, in inducing a firmness of mind for such seasons of danger as peculiarly belong to the military character, and are connected with his employment; from hence I think it must follow, if devotion is expedient to fortify his heart in the day of battle, as a provision for an event uncertain and doubtful, it cannot surely be less so in preparing him for that solemn period which he knows to be absolute and unavoidable, for should he survive that day, still he is not exempt from the universal lot of humanity, but death will find him as easily in the peaceful camp or silent retreat of life, as in the thickest of the ranks amidst the heat of battle. Upheld only by divine providence, whenever he is pleased to give the signal for his dismission, numerous are the messengers of death ready to execute his commands in ministering to that purpose. The slightest accident then becomes sufficient to produce an event which all the fury of war otherwise could not accomplish. By a stroke only the bravest hero falls, and is levelled in the dust. For such a drooping period, happy the man! happy the soldier! who from cherishing senti-

ments of devotion in the former part of his life, hath provided his store of comforts to soften the evil, and sustain him under its unequal pressure.

This is the season of all others, when the high consolations of religion are most needed, and when in fact their full influence can only be discovered. Prior to this, the great advantages of devotion were at the best but imperfectly known. In the midst of the hurry and bustle of life, when health naturally induceth cheerfulness, the mind, buoyed up of itself by various attentions, required not those comforts in a superlative degree, but as sweeteners only of incidental distresses, or as temporary reliefs from the cares of the world. But in the cool retreat and evening shade, when the heat and labour of the day are over, and the devout soldier is quitting the field of duty, and entering the fresh campaign of another state; then the full influence of devotion becomes more necessary, it imparts all its consolations to support the last conflict of expiring virtue.

But should the soldier, unhappily from past vices, be destitute of those resources of comfort which religion provides for good men; what else can be sufficient to lighten and cheer the gloom of that dark hour!

Figure to yourself, if possible, a more wretched character, in that critical period of human nature, than the veteran soldier, who through the various marches of life, hath banished the remembrance of God from his mind, and driven religion from his heart. Excluded from every happy privilege that ariseth from the retrospect of a good life, his mind only furnishes him with the remembrance of an habitual state of irreligion and immorality. As he looks back on the past, he beholds in distressful survey, a long catalogue of crimes; looking forward, his awakened apprehensions paint in striking colours an impending punishment. The sure consequence of a life so spent in sin and folly, must in conclusion be repaid with bitterness of spirit: he sinks in

the arms of death, fuller of vices than years, and drops into the grave without a gleam of comfort or hope.

But the devout soldier, by the very principle of devotion alone, hath made an adequate provision for this last distressing conjuncture of human nature. Religion, which in the former periods of existence was his solace and delight, compensates at that season for all the infirmities of age, sooths the pangs of disease, and softens the hours of languor and oppression. The dream of life being nearly over, and the mind impelled to ruminate on the approaching dissolution, then it is, the pleasing reflection of a good conscience, and the secret approbation of the God he hath served, dart upon his soul with all the benignity of the most consolatory relief. Thus supported he departs under the fullest assurance of having done his duty, and with the glorious expectation of happiness through divine mercy exulting in the language of an apostle, " I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

Such are the advantages, and such the resources of comfort, which the devout soldier is provided with against all those distresses to which the human state in every department is liable, and to which he more especially by his profession is exposed.

From the whole of what has been offered, I hope the conclusion is obvious: that devotion, far from being incompatible with the most independent ideas of the army, on the contrary, is a principle every way expedient to the perfection of a military character; and that in every point of view in which it can be considered, whether as imparting dignity to the profession, steadiness to virtuous actions, giving strength to the arm, or inspiring the mind with fortitude; a devout soldier is a distinction of character worthy the highest emulation.

From a conduct of this nature, heroes of every rank

in war must be formed. Every thing in fact of superlative excellence in the profession, can be attainable by no other means. By this, the officer is furnished with the requisites of shewing collateral eminences, beside those acquired by superiority of rank or distinction. And the private is enabled to conceal the disadvantages of station, by actions that exhibit the dignity of his mind, and the grandeur of virtue in any character. So that, in short, consider it in whatever light you please, devotion is of such high importance to the soldier of every degree, that through every stage of his existence, this alone must be the grand source to produce every thing praise-worthy, and to make him happy in himself, an honour to his regiment, and an ornament to the world.

Arguments these, indisputably great and persuasive, and which I trust will be deemed sufficient to prompt all military characters, who are emulous of excelling in their profession, to allow them a due influence in their hearts.

Greater incentives it is almost impossible I think to produce, unless we carry our ideas beyond the present scene of things, and contemplate the full reward that awaits the devout soldier in a future world, where having finished an earthly and transient campaign, he commences an heavenly and eternal one. From thence indeed more transcendant inducements may be drawn, to animate and dispose his heart to the practice of devotion and virtue. For there will be assembled, amidst the faithful and true servants of God Almighty, all those illustrious warriors of every nation, of every country and clime, who have drawn the sword in a just cause, and distinguished themselves by their piety and devotion towards God, and their justice and charity towards men. Here opens a large field for the most sublime meditation, and furnisheth new and additional

incentives, to call up the study, and animate the devout soldier, in aspiring after such exalted happiness.

On such thoughts therefore, let his mind often dwell; and let him anticipate in idea that period, when having finished, under a course of mortal probation, a life of piety and goodness, he will be called to mingle with all those virtuous and great characters, who are gathered from the corrupt and undistinguished mass in which they are here thrown, and "shine as the stars in the brightness of the firmament." Let him contemplate the glories of that future region of the blessed, and conceive, if possible, the happiness that will expand his breast, when invited to make one of that celestial multitude, in those emphatic words of divine approbation, "well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

WITNESSES FOR GOD:

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. GILES, CRIPPLEGATE;

ON SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1805,

AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHARITY FOR THE

DEAF AND DUMB.

A SERMON.

"Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen."—Isaiah xliii. 8—10.

THAT was a prominent feature of character which the Holy Ghost was pleased to draw of the Redeemer by the prophet's pencil so many ages before his incarnation, when, pointing to his person, he described him in those striking colours: "Behold, your God shall come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing," (Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6.)

And when we compare the portrait with the original, and behold the Son of God going about the streets of Jerusalem, healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people, it must have been the most obstinate prejudice not to have allowed the evident correspondence!

For how should any but He who made man's mouth, give the faculty of speech to the dumb? Who less than God, which made the eye, could cause vision in one born blind?

Had you or I been present at any of the miracles of Jesus; had we seen Lazarus, (John xi. 43, 44.) come forth from the grave at his voice; or the paralytic, (Mark ii. 10, 11, 12.) leap from his couch, and go forth with it at Jesus's command, which but the moment before he lay upon, unable to move; surely, such views

of omnipotency would have carried conviction with them to the breast, not shut up in the most determined unbelief, that this was he to whom the prophet pointed, and that God himself in the person of his Son, was come to save us.

But we stop at the surface of the subject, if we look no further than to the miracles which Jesus wrought on the bodies of men, as so many attestations of his Godhead. It was on the souls of his people he demonstrated the sovereignty of his power. And therefore, here it is that we should principally direct our attention, by way of ascertaining the greatness of his character, or the object of his mission. And when we behold him opening the blind eye of the mind, causing the deaf in spirit to hear, raising the dead in trespasses and sins, and making the dumb in heart to sing; these acts of grace became the distinguishing evidences concerning Jesus, and proved, most decidedly, the testimony of scripture on this point, as he himself in the Jewish synagogue declared, when he appealed to them in confirmation of his authority. "The Spirit of the Lord, (said Jesus) is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," (Luke iv. 18, 19. with Isa. lxi. 1.)

If I mistake not, the circumstances of these children, whose cause I am called upon this day to plead before you, considered both in a natural and in a spiritual sense, carry with them testimonies to the same amount.

In every successful instance where the Lord hath blessed your exertions, to the awakening those faculties of the body which before lay in an unconscious state, doth not the Lord speak loud, and in a language similar to that in my text: "Bring forth the blind people

that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears: ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord?"

And in the still higher objects of spiritual and intellectual apprehension, if that God, who first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, would not this be the most unanswerable and decisive witness for "the truth as it is in Jesus?" and ought it not to compel "every knee to bow before him, and every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father?"

Abstracted from all connection which the words of my text have with the particular period of history to which they refer, I have conceived that the verse itself hath a doctrine contained in it, by way of determining the grand question for God's sovereignty, which will equally suit at all times and all periods. We may, without violence to the sacred word, accept the expressions as forming a standing appeal both in the world of nature and of grace, to demonstrate the existence, power, and goodness of God. And from the testimonies which are every day occurring in confirmation thereof, find such standing proofs, as must for ever put to the blush every attempt to rival God in the hearts of his people. "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Ye are my witnesses."

In the further prosecution of the subject, and with reference to the more immediate occasion for which I stand up before you this day, what I propose, as the Lord shall be pleased to enable me, is, in the first place to shew you, that the Lord hath not left himself without witness, even in the common circumstances which arise out of those events, in the world of nature and providence; when, according to the language of the text, the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have

ears, stand forth as the living testimonies to this great truth.

I shall then, in the next place, take up the subject in a more special and peculiar point of view, when from the world of nature, we go on to the world of grace; and shew yet more strikingly, when the spiritual faculties of the soul are quickened into apprehension, the witnesses arising therefrom that the Lord he is God.

And when I have gone over both these branches of the discourse, I shall desire the congregation which hear me, to make a personal application of the doctrine, how far each for himself feels an interest in it. And I hope in God, that in an assembly so numerous as the present, very many there are in whose minds the Holy Ghost is bearing witness with their spirits, in having quickened their spiritual apprehension to the knowledge of divine things, that they are the children of God. The Lord grant that it may be said of you, as Jesus did to his disciples, "blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear!"

Under my first particular, in shewing you that the Lord hath not left himself without witness in the common circumstances of life, I shall not think it necessary to run over a long and extensive chain of evidences in proof of what is so generally known. All the objects we meet with in the works of nature and providence, more or less, loudly proclaim as they pass us, the unquestionable truth for God: and, (as one expresses it) 'earth with her ten thousand tongues,' is unceasingly filling the universe with his praise.

But it is not to those passive witnesses, (if I may so call them) which arise out of the inanimate creation, that the appeal in the text is made. It is true, indeed, all nature is full to this point: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." But these are not the proper witnesses

which the text before us is considering. The active witnesses which come forth from the intelligent part of God's creation, and more especially from those of our own nature, are those in whom the Lord hath peculiarly manifested some more visible and striking acts of the sovereignty of his power. And here every man is, or ought to be, God's witness. And, indeed, not to be a voluntary witness for God, implies that a man is witness against himself; for such a conduct carries with it the most decided proof of practical atheism.

But even this doth not come up to the full sense of the doctrine of the text; for it is not the general idea of merely confessing the being of God; no, nor the cold and unfeeling assent of the mind to his government in the universe; but it is a more special, a more peculiar, distinguishing and pointed claim, which the Lord makes to certain characters, when he saith, "ye are my witnesses." It is that appeal which the Lord is supposed to make, and which is indeed made by him to every individual, and upon every occasion, when at any time the Lord hath manifested, in a personal manner, some more immediate token of his love, in either of his works, in providence or in grace.

And that man, be who he may, loses the sweetest part of every mercy, that doth not eye God in the mercy. He receives the blessing, but to his dim-sighted view of things, the hand bestowing it is not seen. He sits down to a full feast, but never once inquires where is the bountiful master which furnisheth the table. He riseth from the bed of sickness, and health is again restored to him; but he hears nothing of that voice which saith, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," (Exod. xv. 26.) Alas! what an irreparable loss doth such a one sustain, who thus lives in all the circumstances of life, as "without God in the world!" He witnesses nothing for God, amidst all the multiform mercies which surround him, and he finds nothing in

his own heart witnessing to God his sense of the divine favour. Tell me, if you can, what hath this poor creature, even if he were wallowing in riches, more in the enjoyment than the very brute that perisheth! Whereas, to his enlightened eye, who is accustomed to trace effects to their cause, and from the stream to explore the fountain, a double sweetness is found in every blessing. The mercy, be it what it may, is sweet; and the giver of it is sweet; and the enjoyment of it affords a relish of the purest kind, in the conscious assurance that it comes from the immediate appointment and gift of God, and is accompanied with his divine approbation.

Let us fancy this doctrine to be illustrated in the case of any of these poor children. Let it be supposed for argument's sake, that they are unconscious of any thing more in the recovery of their intellect than of the institution itself, under whose fostering care they receive this mercy. Let it be imagined that their apprehension is excited only to a general idea, that the blessing ariseth out of common causes, is the result only of natural means, the product but of human art, and they are led to discern nothing of God in the appointment. What a poor, defective, and incomplete service would you have rendered them! and what a limited, scanty enjoyment of their faculties would it be after all!

But now reverse those circumstances. Let it be told them, (and which is no impeachment of the best of earthly designs, but, on the contrary, the highest commendation of any,) that in all you have done for them you have only acted as the instrument of God; that it was his wisdom which first projected the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb; his mercy prompted you to the undertaking; and his blessing, through every stage of it, which hath carried it on, and crowned it with success. Let them be further led to contemplate a divine

hand in the appointment, in the distinguishing tokens towards them, while numbers like themselves can derive no benefit from the institution. Fancy, I say, that these and the like images are duly impressed upon their minds, and that their apprehensions are fully awakened to the knowledge of them; and then conceive what a flood of rapture and joy will you have poured in upon them? Surely, every step they have been led in the progress and issue of so much mercy, both from God and man, will be devoutly acknowledged by them. They will bless the means; they will bless the end. You will be loved as the instrument, and God adored as the cause. And the appeal in the text, for the Lord's witnesses to come forward in testimony of his power, will be readily answered in the willingness of their own minds: and, like Israel upon another occasion, under such proofs of his mercy, they will be prompted to cry out, "the Lord he is the God; the Lord he is the God," (1 Kings xviii. 39.)

But this doctrine will meet us with yet more convincing demonstrations of its truth, if we go on, as was proposed, under the second branch of our subject; when from the world of nature we enter upon the world of grace, and from a view of the opening of the spiritual faculties of the soul, manifest the sovereignty of God.

Now in order to have the clearer apprehension of the great work, which, by grace, is wrought upon the mind, when the eye of the understanding is enlightened, and the dumb in spirit is enabled to speak plainly, it will be necessary that we should previously attend to what the scriptures of God have said concerning the defect of those spiritual faculties by nature.

The holy word, in one uniform strain of the most decisive reasoning, declares to us, that in consequence of the original apostacy of man, we have lost that spiritual intellect in the knowledge of divine things, which our first father enjoyed when in a state of innocency.

This was the death he died, according to the sentence of God in the day of his transgression; for as to the natural life we know that he lived many years after; but spiritually, with respect to the knowledge and enjoyment of God, from the day of his fall he died.

And in this lifeless state, as to the apprehension of supernatural and divine things, all his children are born; and, unless quickened by the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, must remain for ever. We derive from our parents the principles only common to natural generation, such as the bodily senses and the faculty of reason, suited to the class of being we sustain in the scale of creation. The spiritual apprehension all the while being unconscious, unawakened, and not brought into action until renewed by the Spirit. And hence the apostle saith, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.) And hence also these bold and nervous similitudes by which the several sacred writers have described this state. It is called blindness, and darkness, and the shadow of death; men are said "to have eyes, and see not, and ears, and hear not, neither can they understand." And the unawakened soul is said to be "uncircumcised in heart and ears; past feeling, and dead in trespasses and sins." And as the contrast to these circumstances, in every instance where the soul is renewed and begotten again, it is called "a new creation." The man is said "to be born again, and to be created anew in Christ Jesus."

From this view of things, we shall now be enabled to form a right apprehension of the evidences which are at any time brought forward in proof, whenever God, by the sovereignty of his power in the world of grace, as well as in the works of nature, summons the blind and deaf in heart, whose faculties the Lord hath renewed, to testify thereby that he is God.

And it is beautiful to remark, how all the senses are appealed to, in testimony of this doctrine. The renewed soul is said to have the ear opened, so that he hears and knows the joyful sound, and walks in the light of God's countenance. The eye is said to see the King in his beauty, and to behold by faith the land that is very far off. Even the senses of taste and smell, and the feelings of the heart, are all occupied in the enjoyment of spiritual things, when once the mind with the affections are renewed. The church declares for herself, that she "sat under the shadow of the Lord with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to her taste: that, because of the savour of his good ointment, his name was as ointment poured forth." And we well know, that the promise of God to "take away the heart of stone, and to give an heart of flesh," was with the express view, that those on whom the mercy was shewn, might have a heart susceptible of divine impressions.

Let us, as in the former branch of discourse, illustrate the truth of this by example. Those children now before you, until your excellent asylum received them into her bosom, had no use of their senses of hearing or speech. Suppose I were to call upon either of them, who, through your instrumentality, have happily recovered the use of their speech, and the lips that were born dumb, were to articulate plainly in your hearing; would not such an evidence carry conviction with it, that the senses of the body were recoverable, under the blessing of God, by the means adopted? And if in the world of nature such events can be produced; if, indeed, such events have been, and are now produced, shall it be thought a thing incredible in the world of grace, that God, the great Father of spirits, should have access to the spirits he hath made, and give a new tone and energy to the spiritual faculties of his people; and especially, when we are taught in his holy

word to expect those blessings from the many promises which he hath condescended to give us concerning them? If the Lord demands the blind and the deaf in nature to come forth as witnesses that he is God, must not the blind and deaf in spirit be supposed as yet more loudly called upon, to come forward as the witnesses both of his mercy and his power?

Perhaps it will tend very much to strengthen the argument, or at least it cannot fail to have its proper effect upon your mind, if, before I enter upon what I proposed under the third part of my subject, in desiring you to make it personal in the application, I were to call upon one of the children of your bounty to give an evidence of God's mercy towards them :—

[Here the preacher called upon one of the children to repeat the Lord's prayer, which, being done in a most affecting manner, he proceeded.]

Gracious God! what hast thou wrought! Was there ever an evidence stronger than what you have now heard, of that sweet scripture being fulfilled, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." (Matt. xxi. 16.) And doth not our God call this very day, in this assembly, by such animated testimonies in the words of the text, "bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears; ye are my witnesses?"

I said, that when I had gone over both branches of my discourse, I should desire the congregation at large to make application of the doctrine in a personal way, and to see how far each for himself is interested in what hath been said.

And if, happily, the Lord hath wrought a work of grace, or manifested his mercy in any remarkable providence in the instance of any that hear me, such will not need the smallest persuasion on my part to come forward as the witnesses of God. Your own feelings will constrain you "to speak the praises of Him, who

hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

And what an endless subject is opened for you to enlarge upon in the relation of divine mercies, whose lives are but a series of mercies in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace! Surely goodness and mercy, you may well say, (as one of old hath said,) hath followed you, gone before you, and surround you all the days of your life.

And doth God call upon the blind and deaf to come forward as his witnesses? Doth he appeal to his works, both in nature, in providence, and in grace, as so many testimonies that he is God? Doth he indeed speak, by the secret whispers of his love, in the numberless, nameless instances of his mercy? And must not every heart feel the powerful awakenings of that call, and answer to it, as the servants of God have done, and say, "thou art indeed my God, and I will prepare thee an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt thee." (Exod. xv. 2.) "My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever." (Psalm cxlv. 21.)

It is high time for me to relieve your attention; and indeed, after what hath been advanced, I have nothing more to offer.

On the subject of charity, in behalf of those whom I might be supposed to plead for, it would be a reproach to your feelings to conceive any one argument necessary. Let any man look at these children before you; let him be told the great object intended from this institution: let him reflect on the advantages proposed from it, in all the relative situations of life, as it concerns themselves, their friends, and the community to which they belong: let him compress within the subject the ultimate good; not simply a charity to the body, but extending to the soul: not limited to present life, but reaching to that which is to come: not simply as

it concerns the giving existence to the exercise of their faculties here, but calling forth all the energies of the mind in devotion, for their full scope hereafter. What shall I say? what can any man say, to heighten those considerations? and especially with minds like yours, which are come here, I hope, with every prepossession to favour so noble a design.

I have ventured on the liberality of my hearers, upon many occasions beside the present, for different charities within this great city; but never for one more interesting. In the professed object of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, every thing is included which hath reference to the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

I only add, therefore, may God himself dispose the minds of those that hear me, that, according to their respective abilities and circumstances, every one may contribute his portion to an institution which every one cannot but approve. And while the Lord is calling for his witnesses in the earth, among all the numberless objects of his mercy, both in the works of his providence and grace, may God be your witness this day, that you are the almoners of his bounty; and that as all things come of him, of his own may you give him, to his glory, and his people's comfort in Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE

PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL,

CONSIDERED WITH PECULIAR REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN THE LATTER DAY DISPENSATION.

AS INTENDED TO SHEW, IN A MORE DISTINGUISHED MANNER THAN IN FORMER AGES, THE LORD'S SPIRITUAL REIGN IN THE HEARTS OF HIS REDEEMED AND REGENERATED PEOPLE.

THE SUBJECT ILLUSTRATED AND EXPLAINED

FROM A COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF THE ORDINATION AND MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL, IN THIS PART OF THE WORD OF GOD, IN THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE, WITH THE ORDINATION AND MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE JOHN'S WRITINGS, IN THE REVELATION IN THE NEW.

THE

PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL.

THE church of the Lord Jesus Christ, during the present time-state of her continuance upon the earth, is wholly spiritual. For as God the Holy Ghost most blessedly speaks on this subject; "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.) In this sense the church of the Lord Jesus Christ hath always been, and always is, and everlastingly must be, when recovered from the Adam-fall transgression, spiritual: and like her Almighty Lord and husband, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

But while this feature of character in all ages marks the church of the Most High God, it was promised that a more visible and open manifestation should be made, of the divine presence, in the dispensation under the gospel. Formed and founded, as the church was, and is, upon the person of her glorious Lord, as "the foundation stone which God hath laid in Zion;" the members of Christ's mystical body were described to be "as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (Isa. xxviii. 16. 1 Peter ii. 5, &c.) Hence the era of the gospel church was to be known, as spiritual worshippers, "which worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) All communications were to be spiritual, and from Christ. All

her apprehensions were to be spiritual of Christ. All her enjoyments were to be spiritual in Christ. And all her desires were to be spiritual after Christ. All and every act of communion had Him for the one glorious object and subject of all spiritual apprehension, so as to make him what Jehovah hath made him, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, of all spiritual joy and peace in believing, "abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

And Jehovah himself in his trinity of persons, seems to have been preparing the minds of men for the expectation of this great event, which was to form the prominent feature of his church in the latter-day glory. For the Lord knowing, that the church, from the singularity of her character contrasted to the world around, both of professor and profane, would attract the attention, and call forth the inquiry of all lookers on, not made partakers in this great salvation; that when they saw the church, like the fleece of Gideon watered with the sacred dew of heaven, while the whole earth around remained dry and parched; and so again, the same fleece, warmed with divine embraces, while the earth was swamped in destructive rain; the Lord directed the mind of the prophet to explain the gracious miracle in reference to himself, as the sole cause of this distinguishing grace in spiritual life; "what shall one then answer the messengers of the nations?" Tell them, "that the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it." (Isa. xiv. 32.)

And if I make a pause here, it should be but to remark, that of all the soul-satisfying solutions, which the truly redeemed and regenerated children of God find, to the many mysterious problems which exercise their faith in the present day, this is the highest and the best. For if they enjoy a spiritual apprehension of the love of the Holy Three in One, to their persons, as they

are in Christ; and daily and hourly live in fellowship and communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost; if they have their minds thus continually directed into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ; these things prove that they are spiritually alive in Christ, and are in spiritual health in Christ; and "their hearts (as the apostle speaks) are comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 2, 3.) And here is an everlasting line of distinction drawn between this spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ and all carnal worshippers. Unenlightened, unregenerated persons, will hear and talk, as the godly hear and talk; for they have both but one and the same bible. Of all the great and distinguishing truths of the gospel, and as far as their head-knowledge and their reasoning faculties can lead them, will give their assent to "the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." But while in a state of unregeneration, they can go no further. For where there is no spiritual life, there can be no spiritual apprehension, no spiritual desire, no one spiritual action; and consequently they are strangers to what the apostle saith, "of their hearts being comforted, and knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding."

And if I make a further pause, to add another observation on this subject, I promise myself that I shall be forgiven. But I would remark, that while what hath been said very fully explains why it is that the present day is distinguished by a more than ordinary zeal for the conversion of the world; the true spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ is so

generally overlooked and disregarded; it would be well if every truly redeemed and regenerated child of God would seek grace from the Lord, to discover the cause of which he himself so frequently complains of his spiritual leanness. It is a melancholy consideration, that not a few of the Lord's people, in whose hearts a work of grace is begun, are, notwithstanding, too often living between hope and fear, and the cause is evident; they are living more upon what they feel, than upon what the Lord Jesus Christ is. They estimate the state in which they stand in the spiritual life, by what passeth within them; instead of hanging all the glory of the Father's house in what Christ hath wrought for them. And wherever this is the case, it is not possible to be otherwise than to have great leanness of soul. I am free to confess that it is blessed, yea, very blessed, to have always in view, and always in enjoyment, the gracious fruits of the Spirit; but it is a sad thing when we value fruits and effects more than the cause, and magnify the work of faith above the glorious object of faith. Oh! what a superiority in the spiritual life doth that child of God possess, who realizeth and substantiates in his own soul, the daily, hourly walk of faith, in that sweet promise of Christ: "If a man love me, (saith Jesus) he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) And very sure I am, whether the members of such a spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ be many or few, in the present day of such profession, such and such only can be truly said to be spiritual worshippers, and "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." And in this alone is the earnest of the Spirit. The redeemed and regenerated child of God lives, while in this spiritual communion, as in the suburbs of heaven. He hath daily communion with God in Christ by faith; and when death

comes, a change of worlds will make no change in this spiritual society. He will have the same God and Father, the same Lord Jesus Christ, the same Holy Ghost then to commune with in open vision, as he hath now through the medium of God's holy word and ordinances. Herein only will consist the change; faith will be lost in sight, and hope for ever rendered unnecessary by absolute fruition.

These preliminary observations will not, I hope, be unprofitable, by way of introduction, to the subject proposed in this little work. It is intended to shew in it some of the leading points of the prophecy of Ezekiel, in relation to the last days of the spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not meant thereby to say, that the ministry of Ezekiel was not directed to the age in which he lived, neither to the successive ages of the prophet before the coming of Christ. No doubt God the Holy Ghost, who founded the church, and ordained and directed all his servants in the several generations of the church, had various designs in their several labours and ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ. But while all this, and much more to the same amount, may be very safely and thankfully allowed, it will appear that the Lord the Spirit had a special reference in the ministry of Ezekiel to the last days. It will be the subject of a future number, to examine this particularly, and especially by taking a comparative view of the ordination and ministry of the prophet Ezekiel, with the ordination and ministry of the apostle John, in those features, where a striking similarity appears; to search, in all suitable humbleness of soul, for the Lord's gracious design in the dispensation. The Lord the Spirit, the Almighty Author of his holy word, dispose the mind both of the writer and reader, to a spiritual apprehension of his holy will herein; and as we are taught that "no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation," under the

Lord the Spirit's guiding, we may "take heed unto it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star shall arise in our heart." Amen.

Without going over the ground already trodden, I venture to assume for granted, that as the church of the Most High God in all ages, is and must be spiritual, all the tendencies of grace, in the ministry of the word, must be also spiritual. And as among the promises of God, the latter day dispensation was to be known, by a more than ordinary effusion of the Spirit on the persona of the Lord's people, when the Son of God had finished redemption and returned to glory, and God the Holy Ghost had come down, in a more open and visible display of himself, for the government of his church and people; then it was that in this era, most eminently was to be looked for, the glorious and gracious manifestation of the spiritual reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it will undeniably follow, that those scriptures, both in the old testament and the new, which refer to this auspicious event, demand the special attention of the Lord's people, and come home to the awakened notice of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, in a voice like that with which the Lord himself closed his message to each of the seven churches in Asia: "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

In this point of view, the prophecy of Ezekiel, abstracted from the historical parts of it, and from those events which had their accomplishment soon after the return of the church from the Babylonish captivity, appears conspicuously striking. No one among the truly taught of God, can be without conviction, that the greater part of this man's inspired writings had respect to the latter day dispensation. Ezekiel, when delivering his prophecy, seems to have been looking forward, not only to the days of the gospel, but to the

remotest period of the days of the gospel. He doth not enter into the subject of the personal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth, (whatever that personal or millennium reign may be) but he draws at large the distinguishing characters of the spiritual church of Christ, by which that church should be known before that period, both from the mere professor and profane. And as God the Holy Ghost, by the ministry of his servants, as well prophets, as apostles, taught the church to expect that "in the last days perilous times should come," in which "heresies would abound, and the love of many wax cold;" the gracious God in the infinite condescension of his love, watching over the spiritual and eternal interests of his people, no less taught them to know him, and the power of his grace in their hearts, by the spiritual communications he would impart to them. "Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I!" (Isa. lii. 6.)

By taking a comparative statement of the inspired writings of the prophet Ezekiel, with those of the apostle John, in his book of the Revelation, with which he closed the canon of scripture, the mind of the redeemed and regenerated child of God is struck with the wonderful similarity. Had the son of Buzi been at Patmos instead of Chebar, when John wrote from the authority of Christ the apocalypse; and had the prophet copied from the apostle, it were hardly possible to have been more in unison on the great subject of their respective ministry. Indeed, both scriptures are in many parts in such perfect agreement, as if the one was designed as a duplicate to the other, and intended by the Almighty Author of all inspiration for mutual explanation. And although Ezekiel wrote his prophecy near six hundred years before the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and John the Revelation

which bears his name, an hundred years after; yet the professed object of both is one and the same. And most evidently to whatever period of the church the one referred, so doth the other. I except, however, in this statement, the last three chapters of the book of the Revelation; for these are wholly descriptive of the personal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth. But all the preceding have respect to the Lord's spiritual kingdom. And this is plain from another consideration. The personal reign of Christ is spoken of, as a millennium, or a thousand years. The spiritual reign of Christ is antecedent to this. The preface to the book itself, is said to be of "things which was shortly to come to pass; sent, and signified by his angel, to his servant John." Rev. i. 1.

Perhaps it will tend, under the divine blessing, to favour a clearer apprehension of this great doctrine of the Lord's church, being wholly spiritual, and as such revealed in both those scriptures, if the subject be considered according to the order which God himself hath been pleased to observe, in the revelation of it by his servants. In doing this, and humbly following the footsteps of the Lord on this ground, I shall begin the subject where the Lord himself began it, namely, with "the ordination of Ezekiel," taking a comparative view as we go on with it of "the ordination of John," for this special ministry, to which the Lord called both. And when I have accomplished this service, I shall then beg to call the reader's attention, under the hope of the same divine teaching, to examine the leading points of the prophets, and of the apostle's writings, as they are found in these respective scriptures. And lastly, offer some few observations, which, if spiritually and scripturally founded, the redeemed and regenerated child of God will do well to ponder on a subject of such infinite importance, considered with an eye to the corresponding events going on in the present awful

day, "upon whom the ends of the world are come." The Lord the Spirit, if it be his blessed will, give his unction to this review of Ezekiel's writings, as the Lord did to Ezekiel in his ordination and ministry; that as the prophet's name Ezekiel, significantly means, (may be felt now, as he did then) "strengthened of God!"

I begin with a scriptural inquiry into the leading particulars of the prophet's ordination. It is worthy of our highest observation, in what a sublimity of order and manner the Lord made an introduction to this solemn service. Thus Ezekiel himself speaks of it. "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." (Ezek. i. 1.) And the prophet proceeds immediately after dating the time, and place, of this wonderful transaction, to state the more striking particulars of the visions. The "hand of the Lord, (he saith) was upon him, and a whirlwind came out of the north: there appeared a great cloud and fire unfolding itself, and brightness about it. Out of the midst thereof, came the likeness of four living creatures;" and they had "the likeness of a man, and the face of a lion, and the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle." And they had wings; "two wings of every one were joined one to another," and two covered their bodies. And they had wings which were "full of eyes round about." And when they went, the prophet saith, that he heard the noise of their wings, "like the noise of great waters, and as the voice of the Almighty. And above the firmament, that were over their heads, was a likeness of a throne, and the likeness as the appearance of a man above it," and from the appearance of "his loins even downward, as the appearance of fire." And out of the fire went forth lightnings. And the appearance of

"a bow in the cloud" in the day of rain. This was the appearance of "the likeness of the glory of the Lord!" See Ezek. i. chapter throughout. Such were the visions with which Ezekiel was favoured preparatory to his ordination.

Let us now take a comparative view of the apostle John's ordination, as is rehearsed at large in the opening of the book of Revelation, which bears his name. In words, not only similar, but nearly the same, he relates to the church a summary account of the revelation made to him at his ordination. "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet." (Rev. i. 9, 10.) And like the prophet Ezekiel, he describes the sight he had of one like unto the "Son of man clothed with a garment down to his feet; whose voice was as the sound of many waters." (Rev. i. 9—16.) He also speaks precisely the same as Ezekiel, of "four living creatures," whose faces were as those Ezekiel saw, and who had wings like those mentioned by the prophet. (Rev. iv. 7, 8.) The "rainbow in the cloud, and the appearance of fire, and the lightnings and thunderings," are as particularly enumerated by the apostle as by the prophet. And if the one was blessed with those gracious manifestations when in captivity, so was the other. Ezekiel by the river Chebar, John in the isle of Patmos. If one was in bondage, the other was in banishment. It was the sabbath day when the visions of God began with Ezekiel, as appears by the renewal of the seven days after. See Ezekiel iii. 16. It was the Lord's day John tells us when he was thus in the Spirit. Rev. i. 10. And if the prophet in the vision beheld the throne, and he that sat upon it was as the "appearance of a man;"

John is express no less to declare, that he, whom he saw, was "like unto the Son of man;" but who called himself, "the Alpha and Omega; the first and the last." Rev. i. 10.

From this view of the preparatory means the Lord was pleased to adopt, for the ordination of the prophet Ezekiel; and from the comparative view of the same, in the instance of the apostle John, in ages so remote from each other, and in which is beheld the most exact agreement; we not only learn that the same Almighty God who prepared the one, prepared also the other; but what is more particularly the object I have at present in contemplation to shew, is, that the ministry of both had special reference to the service of the church, during the spiritual reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the latter day dispensation. I beg that this may be well considered and duly dwelt upon from its vast importance by the reader. And having now observed, with what a world of apparatus provision was made for the introduction of the Lord's chosen servant into this ministry, I shall now request the reader to accompany me to a view of what the holy scriptures have further revealed of the ordination itself, which, under divine teaching, will confirm yet more the interesting truth, that the inspired writings of the prophet Ezekiel, as well as those of the apostle John, in the close of the canon of scripture, were intended with special reference to the reign of grace in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And here the ordination both of the prophet and the apostle is opened to us in the same way, yea, nearly as far as the circumstances admitted, in the same words. Ezekiel in beholding the visions thus expressed himself: "When I saw it, (said he) I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the Spirit entered into me when

he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me." (Ezek. i. 28. and ii. 1, 2.) And what is John's account of the vision? "When I saw him (said John) I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, fear not; I am the first and I am the last! I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen: and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

Secondly. The next account given to the church, in the ordination service of Ezekiel, is of the persons to whom the word of his ministry was to be delivered, and which is declared in those words: "And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spoke unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel to a rebellious nation, that hath rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this day. For they are impudent children and stiff-hearted. I do send thee unto them, and thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; and they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." (Ezek. ii. 2—5.)

Now if our view of the comparative statement of Ezekiel's ordination, and John's, be taken in this point also, we shall perceive a striking analogy. John relates the following concerning the direction given to him; "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." (Rev. i. 10, 11.) Hence we perceive that in

both instances the ordination is one and the same. It is a spiritual ordination, for the prophet and the apostle were alike under the influence of the Spirit. And the mission of both was alike directed to the church. For as in the instance of the prophet, so in like manner the apostle; though Israel was declared by the Lord to be a rebellious house, yet were they still Israel: and in relation to John's ministry, though the whole seven churches to whom the apostle was commanded to send the things which he had seen, were in a sad state of degeneracy, yet were they still called by the Lord himself, the church. Concerning the former, the commission ran in these words; "Son of man, go get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent unto a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel." (Ezek. iii. 4, 5.) And in reference to the latter, though what the Lord said of one, more or less became the character of all; they had "a name to live but were dead, yet the charter of grace remained; "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Thirdly. In addition to these striking particularities of sameness in the ordination of the prophet and apostle, the Lord the Holy Ghost, the Almighty Author of scripture, hath given us another feature which formed a part of the service, and which from the coincidence of circumstances not only loudly proclaimed, that the ordination was one and the same, and from one and the same authority, but also that the ministry to which both were called, were to one and the same purpose. The part of the ordination service to which I now refer, is that part which relates to the eating of the roll, and of the book, with the effects which followed. The prophet's account of the Lord's appointment herein is as follows: "Moreover he said unto me, son of man, eat that thou findest; open thy mouth, and eat that I give

thee. And when I looked, behold a hand was sent unto me, and lo a roll of a book was therein: and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without; and there was written therein, lamentations, and mourning, and woe. And he said unto me, son of man, eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee: then did I eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." (Ezek. ii. 8—10. and iii. 1—3.)

And if from the prophet we turn to the account given by the apostle, we find him thus speaking: "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head; and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. And the voice which I heard from heaven spoke unto me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, give me the little book. And he said unto me, take it and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter." (Rev. x. 1—10.)

Now let the reader ponder well the circumstances here related. Let him mark distinctly the several prominent features in the ordination of Ezekiel and John. Let him not overlook the different periods of the church in which those servants of the Lord were called to the ministry. Let him recollect that in relation to the former (excepting as before was noticed the historical

parts of Ezekiel's prophecy) there is nothing but what is spiritual, and most evidently had reference to the times of the gospel; and in relation to the latter, the very scope of the whole vision and the first voice which John heard, after the messages sent to the seven churches, expressly called upon him to come up higher, for it was said, "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." I say, let these things be duly weighed; the sameness of the ordination of the prophet and of the apostle, as duly considered; and the evident tendency of both writings being of the spiritual nature, closely examined and compared together, and I venture to conclude the result will be, under divine teaching, to carry conviction to every heart taught of God, that the prophecy of Ezekiel, as well as the revelation sent by John, had relation in a special and peculiar manner to the latter-day dispensation, and both were directed to the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I should now, as was proposed, prosecute the subject under the second branch of discourse, and invite the reader's attention to examine the leading points of the prophet's and the apostle's writings, as they are found in both scriptures; from the combined views of which, I venture to believe will appear in much more luminous characters, the evident appointment of God, that Ezekiel was appointed as truly as John, to minister to the church of Christ in the latter day dispensation.

But on this part of the subject, I would beg to fold up the present observations which have been brought forward, with one or two improvements, from what hath been already offered.

And let me call upon the reader to remark with me, with what awfulness those holy men of old were introduced by the Lord himself into the ministry of his sacred word. In the instance of both, and at periods so remote from each other, we find that visions of God were made use of to prepare and solemnize the minds

of the Lord's servants before that the Lord sent them forth to the sacred work. We observe moreover the effects induced thereby on both. When the Lord thus made manifestations of himself, though all in love and divine favour to their persons, they fell on their faces as dead at his feet. Should these observations be supposed to come before any who labour in the word and doctrine in the present hour, may I be permitted to ask, whether it can be supposed that the preparation for the Lord's service is less important now? And if those highly favoured servants of God trembled in the very prospect of the employment, and fell before the Lord as dead when the Spirit had entered into them to give them life? are there any who would rush into the ministry, as the horse rusheth to the battle, unsent, uncalled, unauthorized, unappointed?

Moreover, if as in both instances of the prophet and apostle, the Lord not only called them by sovereign grace, ordained them by divine authority, put his Almighty Spirit in them to qualify them for his service, but caused them also visionally to eat the roll which they were to open and explain to others; made the food both sweet and bitter to their spiritual senses, that feelingly and experimentally they might bring forth to those among whom the Lord sent them to minister, of what they themselves had known in their own souls, of the bitterness of sin, and of the sweetness of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ: if such were essentials in the solemn ordination *then*, can they be less essential *now?* Oh! how impossible is it for a dead, and unawakened, and unregenerate man to proclaim the glory, the fulness, the suitableness, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ? Lord! I would say in mercy to the church, "give pastors according to thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with knowledge and understanding!" Oh! for the Lord to raise up his Ezekiels and Johns now to go in and out in the

present day of rebuke and blasphemy, before thy chosen, as they did of old, and hold forth the bread of life which they themselves have lived upon, and enjoyed, "in fellowship and communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

From the comparative statement which hath been made, of the ordination of the prophet Ezekiel with that of the apostle John, I pass on to the examination of the more prominent features which also mark the special ministry of those servants of the Lord. And I venture to draw a like conclusion, from the general sameness, in the writings of those inspired men; namely, that the Lord had one and the same object in view in their ministry; that both referred to the spiritual church of Christ, and had special respect to the latter day dispensation. In the accomplishment of this purpose, there will need no proof that the book of Revelation was directed to the last ages of the church; for with it the sacred canon of scripture closeth. And if it can be shewn, that the chief scope of the prophecy of Ezekiel, in that part especially which relates to doctrines, is in correspondence with the same, and both spiritual, the conclusion will of necessity follow, namely, that as one and the same Almighty Lord is the Author of both, it should seem, that he hath directed those scriptures with special reference to the church of those latter days, "upon whom the ends of the world are come."

In following up the subject under those leading points to prove their sameness, I would first beg to call the reader's attention to the very striking manner in which it hath pleased the Lord that the ministry of those men should be delivered, namely, in vision. The former of them, Ezekiel, from the first entry on his prophetical office at his ordination, to the close of his labours, delivered by far the greater part of them in vision. And the latter of them, John, from the Lord's

first appearing unto him at Patmos, through the whole of the apocalypse (excepting the second and third chapters, which are epistles to the seven churches in Asia) was in the same manner. Indeed from John's preface, as it may be called, at the commencement of the fourth chapter to the end of his writings, he appears to have been wholly engaged in visions of God. And in proof, he speaks of a new vision at the opening of every seal. I stay not to particularize, a reference to both scriptures will confirm this statement.

I pass on to a second observation, and in perfect conformity to the former, which meets us, more or less in every part of Ezekiel's prophecy, as well as in the apocalypse of John; namely, that in the introduction of their several discourses, they speak as "being in the Spirit." Ezekiel is full of it. He talks of the Spirit "entering into him," chap. ii. "taking him up; and the hand of the Lord being upon him; hearing a voice behind him," chap. iii. throughout. He speaks also of "beholding the likeness of a throne; and the likeness of the appearance of fire; the noise of great waters as the voice of the Almighty; as the appearance of a sapphire stone on the throne; and the likeness of the appearance of a man on the throne; of a bow round about, lightnings," &c. chap. i. throughout, and chap. x. 1. And no less, John is continually speaking to the same amount in his book of the Revelation, and not unfrequently in almost the same words. He opens his fourth chapter with relating to the church, that "a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which he heard was as it were the voice of a trumpet talking with him, which said, come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately (said John) I was in the Spirit and beheld, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne; and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And out of the throne

proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." Rev. iv. throughout. Let these things be compared.

Thirdly. If from those views, which in the analogy of things are so similar, we go on to the examination of the doctrines, as they are found in the writings of both those inspired servants of the Lord, the agreement becomes yet more striking. The whole of Ezekiel's ministry hath a gospel aspect, and in several bearings of his different sermons, there appears so beautiful a correspondence to those of John, in his apocalypse, as plainly manifest, that they have but one and the same tendency; and especially in their reference to the last times. It is too well known a truth, to need more than the observation, that the church of the Most High God was particularly to be marked "in the time of the end," (as Daniel terms it, chap. xii. 9.) as a spiritual church, blessed with more than ordinary tokens of the divine presence. For when the Son of God in our nature had finished redemption work, and was returned to glory, and when the Holy Ghost had come down in a more open display of his eternal power and Godhead than in the former ages, to take upon him the government of his church, then were those corresponding effects of the effusion of the Spirit to follow. And who that reads the prophecy of Ezekiel on this ground of inquiry, and takes with him in his hand as he passeth over the several chapters of the book of the Revelation of John, must be every now and then struck with the wonderful coincidence? Doth the prophet relate the mighty work of God in "sprinkling his people with clean water, that they might be clean;" of "giving them a new heart, and putting a right spirit within them;" of "gathering them out of all places whither they had been scattered?" And what are the several relations of the apostle to the same effect, but as so many counter parts to the like doctrine? John dwells much upon the praises of him "who hath loved us, and

washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and the Father." The song of the church which John heard, is in perfect harmony with Ezekiel's doctrine; and though called a new song, because sung upon the new-strung chords of the renewed heart, yet precisely the same in substance, as old testament saints chaunted, of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The burden of both was, and is, one and the same; "Worthy the Lamb to take the book, and open the seals thereof; for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Compare Ezekiel chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii. with Rev. i. 5 and 7.

I pause for the moment in this place to remark, that it is to be apprehended, by what we perceive in life, many of those scriptures written by the apostle John in the book of the Revelation on these subjects, are much enervated, and lose their effect, from the generally received opinion, that what John saith of heaven in it, refers to the future state. Alas! this is a sad mistake. It is not the church in heaven John speaks of, but the church upon earth. And a small attention, under divine teaching, would be sufficient in proof. The representation made by the apostle in vision, (for it is wholly visional) is a beautiful model of the gospel church as it is to appear in its spirituality. And because it is still in correspondence with the church in the wilderness, and part of the same, the figures made use of are borrowed from the former, but only explained in terms more suited to the latter, and for the better apprehension of spiritual worshippers. Hence, as in the old church, so in this new; the same representation is made of "thrones, and lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." And as in the one, there is said to have been a sea or laver of brass, for the priests to wash in; so in the other, there is described a sea of

glass, placed in the same situation before the throne. And the different orders in the wilderness church of priests and levites, ministering before the Lord, hath a corresponding relation in what is said of the elders and beasts which John saw in the spiritual church. And the call at the opening of every seal, saying, "Come and see;" most decidedly proves a succession of events, predicted to be accomplished and following each other, during the time-state of the church, unto the final consummation of all things. All which representations, with many others, which if needed might be mentioned, described by John in this book of Revelation, can have no reference to heaven, but belong to the church of Christ upon earth. And when the "mystery of God shall be finished," (as it is said it shall be at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Rev. x. 7.) all the different degrees and orders of men in the church will cease. Then our most glorious Christ, having accomplished all the purposes of his redemption, having put all things under his feet, and having subdued all things to himself, the sovereign acts of his grace for his body the church being fully complete, the persons of his people all alike redeemed, and all alike saved in one common salvation, the day of judgment passed, and all things that have offended taken out of his kingdom, there will need no more sea of glass or laver for cleansing; and the administration of his government as Mediator, will no more be needed; but the kingdom will be delivered up to God, even the Father, and the whole church will be in Christ, what the whole church was when chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world—"holy, and without blame before God in love," Eph. i. 4. and God in his Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will be both to the glorious head of his body the church, and all the mystical members in him, "all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

Fourthly. In the further confirmation of this subject,

namely, of the resemblance between Ezekiel's prophecy and John's apocalypse, I would beg the reader to look at both scriptures, on what is said in relation to the doctrine of sealing; than which, according to my apprehension, nothing can more decidedly shew, that both prophet and apostle clearly referred to one and the same thing, both distinguished there by Christ's church, as wholly spiritual, and both had special respect to the church in the latter day dispensation.

The prophet's account of his ministry opens at the eighth chapter, and is prosecuted through the whole of the ninth. He describes himself, as in a vision, when the hand of God fell upon him; and lo, a likeness as of the appearance of fire, and from his loins downwards as fire; that he was lifted up by the Spirit, by the form of an hand, between the earth and the heaven; and being brought in the visions of God to Jerusalem, he saw the chambers of imagery, and the corruptions there abounding in the people; and he heard the Lord's determination to deal in fury, and not spare the people in his judgment. He then in the ninth chapter opens with these words: "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand. And one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub whereupon he was to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side. And the Lord said unto him, go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the forehead of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that

be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young; both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." Ezek. ix. 1—6.

Now let the reader turn, from this review of the prophet's statement of this his vision, which he saw of the Lord's *sealing* in his days, to what the apostle hath stated on the same subject in his days; and then let him judge for himself (for it needs no comment) of the agreement in both. "And I saw," said John, "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads," Rev. vii. 1—3. And in a following chapter, the apostle yet further describes the distinction made by the Lord's sealing his people, by a way of safety from those that are not. "It was commanded (saith John) that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads," Rev. ix. 4. I forbear to offer any comment; the parallel needs none.

Fifthly. That the prophecy of Ezekiel, and the book of the Revelation by John, have respect to the spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ; and both eminently designated, with peculiar reference to the last days of the church, appears to me to be yet more strikingly confirmed from what those writings have predicted of the temple, the church; the structure of which, accord-

ing to the statement by the prophet, is said to be of such magnitude, as no material building can correspond with. The dimensions are described by him to be "eighteen thousand measures," a space too large to be occupied by a building made with hands. And the name of the city carries the same meaning; which "from that day (the prophet saith) shall be Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there," Ezekiel xlviii. 35. John's account of the holy city, which he saw also in vision, coming down from God out of heaven, is described in similar language. "He carried me away (saith John) in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious."

And what is said in both scriptures of the walls, and gates, and precious stones of the building, it were unnecessary to make the observation of being figurative. And if it be said that this city John described refers to the millennium, (be that what it may) I would answer, suppose it so; nevertheless, it proves the correspondence of both sacred writers, in reference to one and the same; and therefore establish what hath been all along attempted to be shewn by these observations, that the prophecies of Ezekiel and John had the same object in view. And what is the spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the personal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts of his redeemed and regenerated church upon earth. Here the dimensions of the temple or city Ezekiel described, or the one which John in vision saw, will be found not too large, according to our Lord's own words; "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, (said Jesus) there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. Here, in the fullest sense of the word may be said, Jehovah Shammah is the name of that city. And hence it will follow, that in whatever part of the earth those two or three of the

Lord's hidden ones be found, there is Christ's church, for the Lord is in the midst of them. And on the contrary, where no spiritual church is, no two or three redeemed, regenerated ones, which alone constitute a church, are; no assembly, however numerous of the mere natural man, can be called by that name. Forms of godliness, without the power of godliness, is the designation given by God the Holy Ghost, to mark the temper of the carnal in the last day. And to all that is the production of mere nature, in her highest attainments, whether professor or profane, the answer of our Lord (when demanded by the pharisees when the kingdom of God should come) is decisive and final; "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you," Luke xvii. 20, 21. And what an unanswerable proof to the whole, namely, that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is wholly spiritual; and that it is now, and hath been, and will be in all the habitable parts of the world, at the final consummation of all things, is that blessed declaration of Christ concerning the events of that day; "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory; and then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven." Mark xiii. 26, 27.

I have but one observation more to offer on this subject, in the comparative statement, between the prophecy of Ezekiel and the revelation by John; namely, in relation to the final destruction of the nations, which oppose the church of God. And the analogy between the predictions of those servants of the Lord on this event, is so striking, that in the accomplishment of the one, can only be found the accomplishment of the other; and both to minister to no period but the last day's dispensation.

I do not mean to carry my reader over the whole ground which either Ezekiel or John have trodden on this subject. Indeed it were unnecessary. One or two of the more luminous parts will be sufficient for the present occasion, and serve to throw light upon the rest. And although I am well aware that several of the prophecies of Ezekiel have already had their accomplishment on certain of the nations; yet I venture to believe the final judgment, and which had a mystical reference to the destruction of antichrist, remains to be fulfilled.

And before I enter upon it, I would detain the reader to observe, that it forms a very beautiful feature of holy scripture, and most decidedly proves its divine authority, and is such as always ought to be kept in view by every redeemed and regenerated child of God; namely, that the Holy Ghost hath so constructed his sacred writings by his servants, that the same scriptures minister to various ages in his church, and not unfrequently, one and the same prophecy hath reference to different periods, and is again and again fulfilled upon different occasions. But while this may be observed in many instances in various parts of holy scripture, that part of Ezekiel's prophecy, which I am about to bring forward, whose bearings are in harmony with similar predictions of John in the Revelation, have had no former fulfilment, but decidedly are delivered as in reference to the last days; and appear so glaring in allusion to the period, the fore-runner of the overthrow of antichrist, as when compared with John's predictions on the same subject, can leave no question but that the ministry of both prophet and apostle on this point, were directed to one and the same.

In confirmation of this statement, I beg to refer the reader to the account given by the prophet of the awful attack to be made on the church of God, by Gog and Magog, in the last days, as related in the thirty-

eighth and thirty-ninth chapters; and let him not overlook the period in which Ezekiel wrote this prediction, namely, in the close of his prophecies: for all the remaining chapters in the book of the prophet's vision afterwards, are concerning the temple of God.

Without entering into the *minutiæ* of all that Ezekiel hath said on this point, which would be inadmissible in a contracted work of this kind: let the short quotation that follows suffice. "After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations: and they shall dwell safely all of them. And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages. I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations which have gotten cattle and goods, and that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold; to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? Therefore, son of man, prophecy and say unto Gog: thus saith the Lord God! in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? and thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts; thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel as a cloud to cover the land. It shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me

when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes," &c. Ezek. xxxviii. 8—16.

Now let the reader observe the more prominent features here marked. First, the time. "After many days: in the latter years." Secondly, the place; namely, the "land brought back from the sword, and gathered out of many people: the mountains of Israel which have been always waste, until brought forth out of the nations." All which are the distinguishing characters of the elect church of God; waste, while in a state of unrenewed nature; but when gathered, are "brought home to God" by sovereign grace. As the Lord said by another prophet: "hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, he that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock." (Jerem. xxxi. 10.) Thirdly, they are said "to dwell safely;" in the land of "unwalled villages;" having neither "bars nor gates." None but the spiritual church of Christ can be so described. They, and they only do dwell safely. For "his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks." (Jer. xxxiii. 16.) The spiritual Jerusalem is at rest in Christ; for "salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." (Isa. xxvi. 1.) Fourthly, the land that "is in the midst of the earth," (or as the margin reads it, the navel of the earth,) can be no other than mount Zion; of which "glorious things are spoken, as the city of God." (Psm. lxxxvii. 3.) And in relation to the same blessed place, another prophet was taught to prophecy concerning the enemy, which in the latter day would come to invade it: "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain." (Dan. xi. 45.) Fifthly, Sheba and Dedan, and the "merchants of Tarshish," are plainly descriptive of the lookers on, or rather perhaps the allies of Gog, who put the questions in this scripture; all naturally bent for the destruction of the spi-

ritual church of Christ. And lastly, the place from whence Gog comes, even "from the north;" and the hand of the Lord in raising him up. All the dispensations both in providence and grace, are in the Lord's appointment. And when the enemies of our God and of his Christ are stirred up to chasten the Lord's people; the Lord's hand is seen directing the chastisement. "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." (Micah vi. 9.)

Now if we turn to the book of the Revelation by John, and take a comparative view of what the apostle was directed to deliver to the church on the same subject, of the church's persecution in the last days; I think it were hardly possible for any of the Lord's enlightened family to read what is there said, without being led to the conclusion that the events predicted, are one and the same. Here, in quoting from the writings of John, as I did before from the writings of Ezekiel, I am compelled to use great brevity. But, indeed, there will be no occasion to amplify the subject by numerous selections from scripture on this ground; the one great point of sameness between the prophet and the apostle in their ministry, in relation to the last days persecution of the church being found within a small compass.

I take for granted the reader is already apprized that the whole book of Revelation contains two parts, namely, the first ending with the eleventh chapter; and the second beginning the same subject again at the commencement of the twelfth. Both are beautiful duplicates of one and the same prophecies; only, (as is not unfrequently observed in other parts of scripture,) the subject is diversified in another form of expression. Hence we find John speaking of the enemies of the spiritual church of Christ, and in the same general names of Gog and Magog, as Ezekiel called them in the twentieth chapter; whereas the slaughter of the witnesses by those antichristian powers, forms the great subject of

his eleventh chapter. And as this eleventh chapter concludes the subject, it is here that we are to look for the corresponding history to that of the prophet's relation of it, as we have already looked at in part, in what we have quoted from Ezekiel's thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters, and with which the man of God closed his prophetical account of the desolating the church in the latter day, and before the personal reign of Christ, (be that what it may,) of the millennium.

I stay not to connect with the view of our subject, what is related by John of the preparatory events in the several parts of his prophecy, leading to the accomplishment of the whole, in "the slaughter of the witnesses." This would lead too far for our present occasion.

Yet I cannot but wish the regenerated and enlightened reader would glance at what the apostle was taught to deliver in his thirteenth chapter, of "the deadly wound given to the beast; and of the deadly wound being again healed." And also in the same chapter, of another beast which John saw coming up out of the earth, and who is said "to exercise all the power of the first beast before him; and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed." (Rev. xiii. 11, 12.) And if he will read all that follows to the close of the chapter on this subject, perhaps he may be led to see under divine teaching, a striking coincidence of things, not far remote from the present history of the church, when either in part past, or to come, or perhaps both; and which the Lord hath been directing for the accomplishment of the holy purposes and counsel of his own will, to bring forward the sufferings of the church, preparatory to the latter day glory of Christ.

But now to the subject of "the slaughter of the witnesses," which, if I err not, Ezekiel was directed to predict in what hath been before quoted; and which

John was taught to prophecy to the church in his concluding chapter of the first part of his book of Revelation. And "there was given unto me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt; where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry: and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." (Rev. xi. 1—10.)

That the slaughter of the Lord's two witnesses remains yet to be accomplished, is too evident to need the observation from the corresponding events which the Lord himself here declares should soon follow; "after three days and a half," (that is, in prophetical language, "three years and a half,) had past." And at the close of which the wonderful events were shortly to succeed under the seventh trumpet dispensation, Rev. xi. 11, to the end. Some of the most enlightened men which this or any other nation hath produced since the days of the apostles, gave in their belief before their departure, that the slaughter of the two wit-

nesses would take place before the close of the seventeenth century, 1699. But time hath manifested their miscalculation. Now we of the present hour are advanced into the twenty-third year of the nineteenth century; and these two witnesses are still unslaughtered. However, things now appear ripening. It hath pleased the Lord in his infinite wisdom to conceal the precise time from his people; probably to induce the greater watchfulness in them. Neither hath the Lord gratified the desire of his people, in a clear revelation who or what those two witnesses of the Lord's are. Perhaps by the number two may be meant those who witnessed in the east and west against the false prophet and the beast. But if we consider the church of the Lord Jesus Christ as wholly spiritual, (and without all doubt his church can be no other,) it will follow that the Lord's witnesses are in every place where the Lord is worshipped "in spirit and in truth." And that such be they where they may, prophecy (or preach) in sackcloth, despised by all and by every one, whether professor or profane, needs no comment. And the greatest enemies to the real spiritual church of Christ, are more among the former than the latter; for who so averse to the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel of Christ, as they "who have a form, but deny the power of godliness." And when the time for the slaughter of the two witnesses shall come, the bitterest part of the persecution will arise from that quarter. Our Lord's words in point are striking. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service." And observe what follows. "And these things will they do unto you; because they have not known the Father, nor me." (John xvi. 2, 3,) for, they are ignorant of all spiritual knowledge, and consequently averse to the distinguishing doctrines "of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in

whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 2, 3.) In relation to the place of slaughter, the Lord himself hath stated in this scripture; namely, in "the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified." I venture to accept this word spiritually, as decisive on the point, that it is the spiritual church of Christ against which the enemies of our Christ will come at the slaughter of the witnesses. And this, if admitted, becomes a further confirmation that it is not local. The spiritual church of Christ is every where, where two or three spiritual worshippers are. And with respect to "the street of the great city," no doubt the greatest malice will be manifested where the greater number of the Lord's spiritual church is. And where can we conceive this will be shewn more desperately than in this land where the greatest opposition is now already shewn to the spiritual church of Christ? Surely the Lord's witnesses here may be said to be clothed in sackcloth, from the general disaffection to their doctrines! I would only add on this subject, that the triumph though but temporary, which all orders of natural men are said by John to take on this event, and sending presents one to another; be as in next correspondence to what Ezekiel said in his prophecy. The men of Sheba and of Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, very fully express the same modern characters, which hate the spiritual church of Christ in the present hour. The Lord's people then which "dwell in safety in the unwalled villages," and the Lord's people "which prophecy in sackcloth now," are one and the same. And wherein are both said to offend; but because in their testimonies to the election of grace, they are an everlasting eye-sore to all carnal worshippers, and as the scripture states it, "torment them that dwell on the earth."

And now let the regenerated and enlightened reader ponder well the whole; let him seek grace from the God of all grace, while he concentrates the several striking points, taken both from the prophet and the apostle, and from ages so remote from each other, into one view. Let him behold with what a world of wisdom the Holy Ghost hath introduced the subject from the beginning; and how vast the apparatus, the Lord the Spirit hath furnished from age to age in carrying it on. And when he hath done this, let him call to mind the era of the church in the present day. Let him look about him in every direction, and within him for his own personal spiritual apprehension of the great truths of God; and let him ask himself whether any foresight less than of Jehovah himself in his trinity of persons could have arranged, or any person less than that which is infinite in the same source, could have been competent to the accomplishment of such purposes? surely it is the spiritual church of the Most High God, to which both those scriptures in the ministry of the prophet and apostle refer; and in the auspicious events which are to mark the prelude to the latter-day glory, and the persecution in the slaughter of the witnesses, with which the great day of the Lord is to be ushered in, can they have their accomplishment.

When the reader hath maturely weighed these solemn and momentous considerations, let him put home the question with a precision that earnestly desires not to be deceived to his own heart, and ask himself what standard less than that which is the sacred balance in the sanctuary of God's spiritual church, can be sufficient in the present awful day of rebuke and blasphemy on one hand, and an almost universal mere profession on the other, to ascertain "the precious from the vile, the man that serveth God from him that serveth him not?" It may be said, and it ought to be said among all that

love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, that in the general amalgamation, with which by a misnomer the religious world is now called, 1 John v. 19, there is no regard shewn in a way of respect to men of different creeds in faith. A professor, and especially if apparently zealous to promote what is called religious institutions, becomes the object of respect, however different his faith may be from that "which was once delivered to the saints." Hence, not unfrequently are found mingling together in the same society, and ostensibly for the same purposes, men of the most discordant creed; as if willing to fritter away all the pure and precious doctrines of the gospel, under the specious covering of universal charity. And hence it forms an anomaly peculiar to the latter days, and the prominent feature of the nineteenth century, that not a few are seemingly forward to promote the conversion of others, of whom, without a breach of charity, it is to be feared they have not been savingly converted themselves.—Hath God the Holy Ghost marked as with a sun-beam the characters of his people distinguished from the world, from the visits, and abidings, and manifestations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, spiritually to their hearts, and minds, and understanding, and consciences: and will not the Lord's dear children be earnest for the discovery of their adoption, and become followers of God as dear children. Is this the one, sure, unerring, and infallible proof that the Lord's people have communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? and shall this criterion, which is the only criterion, be confounded or lost sight of by reasoning and arguments of sophistry? and will a name live while virtually dead before God?

Moreover, what is the true scriptural name and character of the church in the latter day? Is it not as the prophet said, "Jehovah Shammah? the Lord is there!"

And doth not John echo to the same, when he said, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them!" (Rev. xxi. 3.) Can an amalgamation of free will with free grace produce this? The decision of the Lord Jesus Christ on this subject might have been supposed final: "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." (John iii. 6.) And as nothing can rise above its source, so nature in her highest attainments can never be spiritual. To mingle the one with the other, and to ascribe to free will, what only can result from free grace, is forming what Paul calls another gospel, and what he so severely condemns as no gospel, Gal. ii. 6—9. A redeemed and regenerated child of God may through infirmity, and the strength of temptation, fall into error, and yet not depart from God. But to compliment reason at the expence of revelation, and substitute human efforts in the place of divine strength, or to join them together, this is perverting the gospel of Christ. This is indeed what Paul calls another gospel, or rather, no gospel at all. It is high treason against the majesty of God. How far the present day and generation answer to this character, I leave the reader to consider.

Tremendous are the judgments which the scriptures with one voice declare are to be the forerunners of the Lord's second coming. The slaughter of the two witnesses must take place. And if what the Lord the Holy Ghost gave the prophet Daniel to deliver in the last chapter of his prophecy, remains to be fulfilled, see chapter xii. 1, the very apprehension is enough to make the ears of every one that hears it to tingle. That it could not refer to the seige of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian's army, seems evident, because that the accompaniments Daniel speaks of were not then shewn. We

see them now, and perhaps the judge is at the door! "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (chap. xii. 4.) But what knowledge? Not that "which maketh wise unto salvation!" for the prophet saith, "the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand: but the wise shall understand." (chap. xii. 10.) What societies, what subscriptions of money can add to, or take from the number of God's elect? "when the Redeemer shall come to Zion, he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob! Then," but not before, "the eyes of men as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be towards the Lord! He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

COMMENT

ON THE

NINETEENTH CHAPTER OF ISAIAH,

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNIVERSARY OF THE GOSPEL TRACT SOCIETY,

AT FREEMASON'S HALL, ON FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1826.

COMMENT,

&c. &c.

THE Reverend Doctor after reading the chapter throughout, observed, That, amidst very many other scriptures, which in their prophetic signification had an eye to the present day of the church, and were highly meriting the attention of those "upon whom the ends of the world are come," this chapter, whose title carries in its front, "the burden of Egypt," had a peculiar claim to the attention of this society, for the circulation of gospel tracts; and might be considered, in its spiritual tendency, as giving authority and countenance to such an institution. In confirmation of which he should offer a short comment upon the more striking particulars contained in it, by way of illustration of the corresponding analogy between the great events here predicted to take place in the gospel day, and the leading design of the Gospel Tract Society, as instrumental in the Lord's hand, for the accomplishment of those divine purposes.

By the word *burden* of Egypt, is meant *prophecy* concerning Egypt. The term is very generally used in holy scripture by the prophets. Indeed, in the Arabic version of Isaiah's writings, the word is rendered *prophecy*. And there is a great beauty in the expression, when referring to the wonderful events which are to distinguish the church of Christ in his *spiritual* reign in the latter-day glory. For a burden, or weighty subject, of things to come, contains in its bosom many vast

and important sayings, which like the *Michtams* of David, are *golden* sayings. This, in reference to the Lord's gathering his people from Egypt, is eminently so. And the manner in which the prophecy concerning Egypt is ushered in, and the effects induced thereby, cannot but arrest the attention. "Behold! the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt. And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom." The scripture then proceeds to state the effects which follow. I need not recapitulate the several particulars here enumerated, having already in your hearing gone through the whole chapter. But if, at your leisure, you will again look at this memorable scripture, and then take a comparative statement of what is going on in the world, and the Lord shall be your teacher; you will discover the several marks resulting from the Lord's visiting his people in all places whither they are now scattered, and the sure consequences which cannot but result from his gracious manifestations unto them, like those here spoken of Egypt. In the bringing home his scattered ones, the Lord causeth every thing to minister and become subservient to his almighty designs in the promotion of his glory, and his people's happiness, in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace.

I pause to remark, and to call your attention thereby to the remark of the beautiful as well as sublime description, veiled under symbolic expressions of the Lord's dealings with his people, when in the call of nations, or individuals from among those nations, the Lord is seeking out his redeemed, and gathering them from among men. He is said to ride upon a swift cloud. Yes! all his dispensations are swift, sudden,

unexpected, unlooked for; though to his people's view, in the first manifestations of himself, they are *cloudy* dispensations. "Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Ps. xcvii. 2. "He maketh the clouds his chariots, and walketh upon the wings of the wind." Ps. civ. 3.

But beside these sovereign acts of almighty grace, which mark the divine administration, when the Lord is about to work a work of grace in the hearts of his redeemed, whether in the burden of Egypt, or among any other nation; there is an uncommon beauty in the similitude of the Lord's riding upon a swift cloud when he would come into Egypt. Egypt had little or no waterings by the clouds and rain from heaven; the river Nile of Egypt when overflowing its banks at the stated period, which the Lord in his providence had appointed, answered all the divine purposes in nature, in watering Egypt to bring forth the fruits of the earth. The swift clouds, therefore, upon which the Lord would ride, when visiting Egypt in a way of grace, became a prelude of the sovereign design for which the Lord would come "in the day when he would bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound." Moses, the man of God, when reminding the children of Israel of their distinguishing mercies, in their deliverance from their rigorous bondage in Egypt, and their going under the Lord's guidings to the possession of Canaan, the glory of all lands; not only adverted to the tokens of divine love in *nature*, but connected with it the Lord's work in *grace*. "For the land (saith he) whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and watered it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and vallies, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the

Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."

But the vast and important purposes for which the Lord is said to ride upon a swift cloud when coming into Egypt, in relation to the *spiritual* design of his coming, remains to be considered. *First*, it is said, that "the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." The reign of idolatry totters at its centre, at the appearance of the Lord of Hosts; and very blessedly doth this same prophet, in another part of his prophecy, speak of the effects which take place when the Lord thus visits his people. "In that day (said he) a man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth," Isa. ii. 20. Next follows the misery of soul which takes place among the Lord's people, when the Lord cometh to call them home; "the heart of Egypt, it is said, shall melt in the midst thereof." Yes, compunction for sin deeply felt in the conscience, will always accompany the Lord's manifestation of himself in a way of grace, when he cometh on a swift cloud for those divine purposes; and the heart will melt with sorrow. Next ariseth the contention induced by a change of life and conversation, between the choicest friends in *nature:* "Egypt will be against Egypt; brother against brother;" and "a man's foes are they of his own household." To this succeeds the various attempts of reform, which under the first alarms of conscience men set up for themselves: the prophet speaks of it in this chapter under the similitude of seeking to *charmers and familiar spirits*, and the like; any thing and every thing is attempted before Christ; and until he is known, num-

berless plans of reform will be set up in a way of conciliating the divine favour. Next follows the judgments of the Lord in his *providence*, turning the rivers away; the brooks of defence emptied and dried up; all things withering; the very resources of maintenance for the body is withheld; while the Lord visits the soul. "Neither (saith the Lord) shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush may do." Such are among the leading characters by which the Lord's coming into Egypt for the *spiritual* salvation of the Lord's people, which are figuratively set forth in the former part of this chapter.

I pause again in this part of the subject, to advert to the common analogy of things in the divine administration, and to call your attention to what is the leading object I had in view in directing your present contemplation to this portrait of Egypt, as singularly striking to the times of the day in which we live, and thereby eminently recommending to the Lord's people the interest of the Gospel Tract Society. The imagery and figures made use of by the prophet in allusion to Egypt, may by a parity of reasoning be rendered suitable to every other nation, kindred, and clime, where the Lord's scattered ones are dwelling. For the methods which the Lord is pleased to adopt for their recovery is tantamount to one and the same, when in stores of his omnipotency the Lord seeks them out. Egypt is not singular in her visitation: the Lord rides as upon a swift cloud when he comes into a nation or province, "to take one of a city and two of a family, to bring them to Zion." And as by Egypt, so by them: the idolatry of the heart trembles at his presence; the dunghill gods of *Osiris* and *Iris*, which the Egyptians worshipped, were not more thrown down, than are the several species of abominations which all men in a state of unrenewed nature set up, and are following when the work of grace begins in their souls. The Lord that

"mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt," hath manifested the indignation of his anger in causing a perverse spirit to pervade all the efforts of human religion. Ephraim is found thus whole for a while, until the time of recovery, the Lord said, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone," Hosea iv. 17. And as in Egypt the Lord accompanied the manifestations of his *grace*, with the visitations of his *providence*, so is it for the most part in all his dispensations towards his people throughout the world. Are there no nations of the earth in the present hour, to whom we may look, and discover similar traces of the Lord's combining judgment with mercy? Do not you and I know, in the instances of societies and individuals, where the Lord, as by Egypt, when he confounded "the workers in fine flax, and they that wove the net works;" so the same sovereignty hath been shewn in stopping the wheels of trade, by which among many, the means of providing for themselves and families have been suspended, and the sinews of industry broken. And do we see Egypt when under the visitation seeking *to charmers and wizards* for direction? and can we overlook those who under more enlightened times are substituting any thing and every thing rather than "the faith once delivered to the saints?" Do we not daily see instances among the great mass even of professors, who instead of the pure and unadulterated word of God, are content with the mere semblance of religion; a name to live, and yet dead; a form, without the power of godliness; a gospel without Christ?

But the prospect brightens towards the close of the chapter; and very blessed promises are given of the Lord's gracious designs towards Egypt, by which the restoration of his people in the midst of Egypt shall be effected, by his own Almighty arm, in the great day of his coming. "In that day (saith the Lord by the prophet) shall five cities in the land of

Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear by the Lord of Hosts." By "five cities," as in other parts of scripture, we are to understand is meant a definite number for an indefinite; the parable of the ten virgins is in point, Matt. xxv. 1, &c. where it is said, "five of them were wise, and five were foolish;" not as if an equal porton would mark the "precious from the vile," at the last day; but the expression is as before, the statement of the doctrine, and not the number of the persons which were or were not interested in the one, and preserved from the other. The apostle Paul's "five words" he speaks of, are to be construed by the same limitation. 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

And the several features descriptive of the salvation of Egypt, which are enumerated in the close of this chapter, are in beautiful correspondence with the uniform plan of the divine administration in the recovery of the Lord's people by the Lord himself from all the varieties of the earth. Gathered by the Almighty arm of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, there are manifested all the blessed and gracious effects which prove the heart and affections won to God. The happy partakers of those unspeakable mercies testify whose they are and to whom they belong. They no longer speak the language of Ashdod, but the language of Canaan. They no longer sacrifice to the gods of wood and stone, the work of their own hands; or do homage to creatures and reptiles, as did the Egyptians; but the Lord of Hosts is alone exalted in that day, and his name great among the gentiles. They dare not keep secret their profession, or conceal the mighty change wrought upon them; for their altar is now the Lord of Hosts, and the pillars they erect in testimony of his grace, like that which the patriarch Jacob set up in Bethel, when at that memorable spot the visions of God were first opened to him. Gen. xxviii. 18, 19.

And do observe the striking similarity which this history of the conversion of Egypt bears to the conversion of the heart of the Lord's people among all nations. "They shall cry unto the Lord (saith the prophet) because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them." Yes, the cry of the soul, under the deep sense of sin, when calling to the deep of divine mercy, shall be heard and answered; the Lord hath sent this mighty Saviour. Abarbanel himself, though an unbeliever, concerning the precise time of the advent of our Lord, was constrained to confess, that this Saviour, this great one, could be no other than the Messiah. And the progress of these marvellous acts of grace follows in the statement of the Lord's work in the close of the chapter. "For the Lord shall be known in Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day." These are the sure marks of the gospel dispensation, when made known to the Lord's people; and every minute circumstance which follows regenetion is shewn to correspond to the one uniform feature, by which the Lord's recovered ones are discoverable. "They shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and shall perform it." The Holy Ghost by Peter hath drawn a very interesting portrait of the church at large on this subject, when under the similitude of "new born babes, which desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;" he describes them as coming to the Lord, and as "a spiritual house, and an holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And what sums up and endears the whole, is the statement which the prophet gives, that the sole work of this mighty change from nature to grace, in the redemption of the Lord's people in Egypt, is the Lord's own act and for the Lord's own glory. Egypt is represented through every part of the chapter as altogether passive in those

divine operations; the Lord that smites Egypt, is he alone that can heal Egypt; and the return of Egypt to the Lord, is not of Egypt's strength, but the Lord's. And as the Lord said upon another occasion, so in the instance of Egypt, and every other. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord," Zech. iv. 6.

And the prophet, under divine inspiration, having thus delineated the burden of Egypt, and the eventful blessings of the Lord in his deliverance from it, by gathering out his people from among that nation, closeth in the chapter with a beautiful summing up of the whole, which like the Pleiades, shine together in one rich constellation. "In that day, (saith he) that is, the gospel day, there shall be an highway out of Egypt to Assyria; and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptians into Assyria. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land." Yea, as the same prophet saith in another part of his inspired predictions, "there shall be an highway, and a way, and it shall be called, the way of holiness;" and while "the unclean (that is, the unregenerate) shall not pass over it, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein; but the ransomed of the Lord," out of every nation, kindred, and tongue, "shall come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads." Isa. xxxv. 8, &c. The Lord will own them for his own, when he maketh up his jewels. Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, even the true Israel of God shall be all together, and the God of Israel will be in their midst; "whom (as this chapter concludes) the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

If I have succeeded, under the Lord's teaching, in my comment upon this chapter, I shall have shewn at the same time the object which I had in view in

making a reference upon the present occasion to this part of holy scripture. Our Gospel Tract Society, whose origin, tendency, and design, in all her bearings, is in perfect correspondence with the several prophecies here delivered, can need no higher authority for action as instrumental in the Lord's hand, but to bring home his people. So that when demanded what are the motives which gave rise to this Society, and wherefore the special designation of it, the Gospel Tract Society, rather than any other, we adopt the language of this same prophet, and say in his words, "what shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? that the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it." Isa. xiv. 32.

That the Lord's people are a scattered people, is among the plainest truths of holy scripture. That one promise of the Lord, if there were no other, (and the bible is full of assurances to the same amount) is decisive; "He shall send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." Mark xiii. 27. A plain proof that the church, in all her members, is scattered throughout the habitable world, or the individuals could not be thus brought. And the certainty of the Lord's people being gathered is not more sure, than that the Lord himself will be the gatherer; the proclamation in the holy mountain is to this effect—"Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations! and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock." Jer. xxxi. 10. And it must be so; for as the scripture statement of their dispersion is such, that they are finally and fully to be gathered from the four winds, it is evident that some of them must be in those remote quarters, far removed from each other. And the prophet hath decidedly shewn this, when declaring that "the remnant of

Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for men, neither waiteth for the sons of men." Micah v. 7. Instruments the Lord will use; instruments in all ages of the church the Lord hath used; and our Gospel Tract Society aspires to no higher province than an humble instrument in the Lord's hand, sent of God. But as salvation is solely the incommunicable work of Jehovah, so the whole efficiency of salvation is no less of Jehovah also.

Here again we find the blessedness of the divine assurances. The same prophet, whose writings we have been traversing over, in what he hath called "the burden of Egypt," hath taught the church, under the same Almighty direction, the gracious operations of the Lord in the accomplishment of his divine purposes in the delivery of his chosen from all their captivity. "It shall come to pass in that day, (saith the prophet, still alluding to the gospel day) that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Isaiah xi. 11, 12.

I must not trespass further. If I detain you a moment longer, let it be to observe, that great events are pending in the present era of time; the nations are roused to a more than ordinary attention, and every eye is on the look out for some portentous accomplishment, from the general appearance of things around. Moreover, the world itself is grown to an old age; the nineteenth century is far advanced; and the predictions concerning the last days, as the period

draweth nigher, assume a larger and more formidable aspect. The symbolical representations with which the canon of scripture closed, have in many instances been realized; and the figure of seals opened, trumpets blown, and vials poured out, meet us no longer wrapped up in mystery; but in the fulfilment of those which are already past, we are enabled, through grace, in many instances, to form conclusions of those that are to come. A great struggle with the kingdom of darkness the church of God hath yet to sustain; but the issue is not doubtful; order will at length arise, from seeming confusion. On this bottom our Gospel Tract Society is founded; the Lord hath blessed it in many examples of his mercy, during the three last years from its commencement. His blessing is still upon it, and will follow it; and under these auspicious views we are looking for that period which the mighty angel clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, with his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, proclaimed, while he sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that "there should be time no longer." To this era our Gospel Tract Society is humbly ministering. To this dispensation of the fulness of time, we are, with faith in lively exercise, looking. Then will that blessed period arrive, the culminating point of consummation to crown all; when the Lord finally, and fully, and completely, will have brought home his redeemed, and not one shall be left behind. And then will that holy scripture have its full accomplishment, he "will have gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Eph. i. 10.

After the business of the Society was ended, the Doctor concluded with the following remarks:—

"Brethren, before we separate from each other, I beg to trespass a moment on your time and patience;

first, to bless the Lord for his mercies over us this evening. And, secondly, to thank you for the unwearied attention you have granted me upon this occasion; and to commit and to commend you, and the Gospel Tract Society, together with myself, to the special blessing of heaven.

"I am an old man going out of life, and cannot in the very nature of things, hope to see your faces any more upon any future anniversary. I therefore very cheerfully leave you with the Lord, in whose Almighty hands I have lodged all my concerns, for life and death, for time and eternity. I pray you to follow me in spirit to the throne, and do the same. And with an eye to this institution, do not fail in every supplication for the Lord's blessing on it to plead the Lord's own promise. It is the Lord Jesus hath said it, and it is the Lord Jesus which only can perform it. Lodge the promise daily at his footstool; and as daily watch and wait the answer. "For thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out; as a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Even so, amen. To the holy, undivided Three-One, which bear record in heaven, be everlasting praise.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

BOOK OF THE REVELATIONS.

THOUGHTS,

&c. &c.

THE present complexion of the times, appears to have a peculiar tendency to the studious and humble waiting upon the Lord in his holy word, and especially in that part of it which is called the book of the Revelation. And as this portion of the inspired writings hath a most gracious promise, given to such as not only read, but those that hear, and keep the divine contents in their remembrance; there can need no other recommendation to such as are enlightened to a spiritual apprehension of divine truths. The promise is in the very portal of the book, and standeth at the entry: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." By the time being at hand, could not be meant that the whole events foretold would all be soon accomplished; for certain it is, that there hath been a succession in the order, and while many have been fulfilled, and some are now fulfilling, there are not a few, (and to the church at the present hour, big with importance,) which appear as if ripe for accomplishment. So that though it is said in the exordium of this divine prophecy, that it refers to "things which must shortly come to pass," it did not limit to an hasty close; nay, the Arabic version of the apocalypse, renders the words, "to be fulfilled in future ages." I venture to conclude, therefore, that taken in one great whole, it forms a gracious unfold-

ing, under mystical allusions, to all the events of the church, under the consummation of all things. And from the present circumstances of men and things, I venture yet further to conclude, that the nineteenth century will develope much of what is contained in the prophetical part of the apocalypse. And to these conclusions, whether well or ill founded, it were needless to add a single recommendation to the spiritual church of God, for its study. "The revelation of Jesus Christ," as it is very blessedly called, carries with it the divine authority; and though to natural men it cannot but prove a sealed book, for which they have no understanding, yet to the taught of God, the encouragement is the same as in all ages; "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." (Psalm xxv. 14.) The Lord's people under the Lord's unction, will find in this blessed book enough to recompense their humble waitings upon the Lord in their daily study of it. Of the things themselves contained in it, and of their sure accomplishment in due season, agreeably to the time predicted, they will receive the most ample conviction. And if the Lord still holds the veil over the precise season, however prompted the child of God may be, like the prophet of old to put the question, "Oh! my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" questions of curiosity are not in the list of divine revelation. It will be well for the writer of these lines, and no less for the reader, if the same gracious answer be given to both as was then to Daniel: "go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel xii. 6—13.)

The spiritual reader of the book of Revelation will find great inlet, under divine teaching, to the right apprehension of those sacred records, when he considers what the Lord intended by those symbolical representations of "seals opened, trumpets blown, and vials

poured out," to shadow forth the different periods and dispensations with which the church would be exercised in the earth. The Lord evidently here taught his people of what the Lord had said and prepared them for ere his personal departure. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.) Much persecution must and shall take place. It is necessary that the Lord's people should be conformed to the Lord's image. But out of confusion order shall at length arise. And in the mean time, Jesus now speaks as he once did to the angel of the church in Smyrna. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold! the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.) What a cheering word of promise is this for the worst of times. The devil would then, as he would now had he power, not only cast *some* of the Lord's people into prison, but *all* of them. And not merely *prison*, but into *hell*. And he would cast them in for ever both into prison and hell, but it shall only be in prison for ten days, and not an hour beyond it. And the Lord explains wherefore it is that he is allowed to do even this, and that is, not for the devil's pleasure, as the Lord permits it for the trial of his people, and the exercise of their faith. And Jesus in bidding them to be faithful, wills them into it. It is as if the Lord had said, I will make you faithful, Jer. xxxii. 40. Philip. ii. 12, 13. And how blessedly the Lord closeth in the scripture, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

Perhaps it may be helpful under the Lord's teaching, to the reader who by regeneration is brought into a capability of discerning spiritual truths, to take a view of some of those events which the scripture prophecy

in this book predicted, and which have been fulfilled. We can form no certain conclusions of what is to come, though we have the prophecies before us. But in beholding the history of what is passed, and then taking a comparative statement with what is according to the prophecies to be expected, we hereby take the best method under the Lord's guidance, to be like the man of God on the watch tower for the appointed vision. (Habak. ii. 1—3.)

If we proceed according to the order of scripture in this sacred book of God, our first attention will be to what is related "of the mystery of the seals," during which period the most violent persecution the church sustained took place. It was not until the opening of the second seal, about the year of our Lord God 66, that the persecution of the church arose to a magnitude most tremendous and frightful. The Roman empire was then, and for many hundred years after continued, pagan. Hence under the oppression of those pagan emperors it is incalculable what the church suffered. Nero, a very monster of iniquity, appears to have taken the lead. If half or a tenth part of the cruel edicts passed by Nero, and put in execution by his officers, upon the christians for being christians, and which are handed down in history, be true, the imagination cannot scarcely form any cruelties of a parallel nature in human records.

But though the outrage on the followers of the Lord Jesus began with Nero, every succeeding emperor more or less followed it up. Ecclesiastical history relates no less than ten most awful persecutions, accompanied with murders of the most atrocious and cruel kind, which were included within the period of little more than two hundred and fifty years. For from the opening of the second seal in the year 66 to the year 316, those persecutions raged more or less continually. When it pleased God under the government of Con-

stantine to proselyte the emperor, and with him numbers became favourable to christianity, the church enjoyed a calm. It was during his reign from the year 323 to 338 when he died, that the seventh and last of the seals was opened.

It is very blessed to observe from the history of those times, what memorable examples the Lord then furnished from his church, as so many trophies of faith. The multitudes which were destroyed, and their lives forced from them, by the most cruel ferocity the savage nature of their murderers could invent, were so overruled by the predisposing grace of God given to them, as to extort at times from the lips even of their enemies, an acknowledgment of their magnanimity. The Lord seemed to have caused the same spirit which is recorded of ancient martyrs, to have appeared in the more modern of his people. What an animated account is given in holy writ of those heroes of the church whose lives were so blessed, and whose deaths were so triumphant. It is said, "that through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." And yet the close of their history gives this blessed testimony to them, "that of them the world was not worthy." (Heb. xi. 33, &c.) Supposing there should be such a time of persecution to arise again in the church, is it to be hoped from the

present state of things that there is a seed of the like generation to bless the Lord? It is a solemn question. But in the prospect every face may gather blackness, especially when we hear the Lord's voice making the proclamation, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke xviii. 8.

It is our mercy the Lord hath not removed the candlestick out of its place. We have our ordinances, our sabbaths, the blessing of the holy scriptures, and both in spirituals and in temporals our appointed weeks of harvest. It will be well to appreciate their value while we have them. It is the absence of mercies for the most part, which makes our unthinking minds sensible of their importance in the loss of them. The church at Antioch, when Chrysostom their minister was banished, declared that they could better have parted with the sun from the firmament, than this great light from the church. And when that man of God, Nazienzen of Constantinople, was preaching his farewell sermon, the people were so exceedingly affected with the prospect of his departure, that they were all in tears, and one among the rest could not contain, but exclaimed, '*Aude pater! et tecum Trinitatem ipsam ejice!*' that is, 'go, father! and you will take away the Trinity with you!'—Oh! what days were these? will they ever return?

In prosecuting the subject proposed, on this mysterious book of God, and especially with an eye to the present advanced day of the church, from the contemplation of the events which were enveloped under the seven seals, as they followed each other in orderly succession; our next view will be, to the consideration of the similar predictions, included under the ministry of the seven trumpets. When the seventh seal had been opened, which carried the history of the church to the overthrow of pagan Rome, the first trumpet soon after was blown, to intimate the destruction and

wasting which were to take place in the church. It is worthy remark, that the seven seals ministered in their predictions during the continuance of the pagan empire, until the reign of Constantine, when Rome became christian. But though under the auspices of this new emperor, who himself being converted to christianity, the church was freed from *outward* persecution, yet the heresies which sprung up as a polypus, with its many suckers, subjected the church to much *inward* affliction. I admire the manner of expression which the apostle used in the account given after the opening of the seventh seal; he saith, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Rev. viii. 1. By heaven is meant the church, which had a short calm from the fires of persecution, long sustained from paganism, when the empire under the influence of the emperor, declared for christianity. But this calm was shortly interrupted by the rise of heretics, and which hath continued to infest the church ever since. And we are taught to expect, that there will never be a total deliverance, until in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound his trumpet, and "when the mystery of God shall be finished." Rev. x. 7.

But I admire still more the very gracious manner in which the trumpet dispensation is ushered in, when as it is said, "the seven angels stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets;" for John saith, that "another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunder-

ings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." Rev. viii. 2—5. I need not dwell long in giving proof who this was. It could be none but him, who is himself both the altar, and sacrifice, and sacrificer. Every part of the bible, both in the old testament and the new, hath pointed him out under those high and endearing characters. Before the fulness of time, for his openly tabernacling in substance of our flesh, as if anticipating that advent, he sometimes appeared to his people in the form of a man, and sometimes in the form of an angel. And in that memorable instance to Manoah and his wife, very similar were then the acts of Christ to what is related here. For when at their earnest request, they were permitted to offer a sacrifice, it is said that "the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. Now it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of fire." Judges xiii. 16—20. So that under both dispensations, old and new; the acceptation of the persons of the Lord's people; their prayers and oblations; their adoption and communion; their access here in grace, and hereafter in glory; all is in him, and "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein we are accepted in the beloved."

If I detain the reader a moment longer over this view of our most glorious Lord, it shall be only to request his attention yet somewhat more impressively, to remark with me, how very blessedly timed was this appearance of our most glorious Lord, in this his high priestly office. The trumpets, denoting trouble and sorrow to the church, were now about to sound. The true servants of the Lord in all ages, considered this proclamation as a sure presage of affliction. Hence, we have the prophet exclaiming, "my bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart, my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, be-

cause thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war." Jer. v. 19. How very sweetly and affectionately was this manifestation of Christ to his church, preparatory to what was about to follow! And it should not be overlooked that every part of the divine service carried with it a corresponding attention to the various circumstances of the Lord's people. The golden altar, and the golden censer, according to all the analogy of scripture, testified his own eternal power and Godhead. And no less the incense, and the fire of the altar, shadowed forth the sufferings of Christ, in his human nature. And while the ascension from his almighty hands shewed the infinite value of his propitiation for his people; the casting the fire from the altar on the earth, as plainly indicated the sure destruction of their enemies. And the voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and the earthquake; testified the gracious responses from the Lord, not unsimilar to what is said on a like occasion in the fiery trial of the apostles, by the sanhedrin, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts iv. 31. The reader will do well to connect both histories with the present day. He will keep in remembrance, that in all ages, the church, until the Lord takes her home is the same. That the bush burning with fire and not consumed, is explainable only by the self-same cause, as when Moses beheld it. Exod. iii. 4. And as the trumpet dispensation through the whole, is but the signal from the Lord to his people of tribulation; this view of our most glorious Christ, at the opening, was intended for the church's support, under every one that was to follow. Nay, the nearer the church is brought to her final persecution under the sixth trumpet, and until the seventh of her triumph in Christ is proclaimed, the greater the exercises of the faithful will be; and the more emi-

nently will be seen this mighty angel appearing for his chosen, at the altar of incense. The manifestation of the Lord Jesus was blessedly timed then, and on numerous occasions since; and it will be our mercy and the wisdom of the church under divine teaching, to have it always in view. For just before the final sound of holy joy, in the triumphs of Christ and his church, we read, that "when the second woe was past, behold the third cometh quickly." Rev. xi. 14, 15.

The progressive order of the sounding of the trumpets, hath called forth a succession of opinions, just as might have been supposed, the different complexions of the human mind might give a diversity of colouring to. Commentators have endeavoured to calculate the time of each, and the tendency of all. But the Lord hath been pleased to throw a veil over all discoveries, but such as have a tendency to the promotion of the divine glory. That the trumpet dispensation differed very materially from the seal dispensation, is among the palpable facts that both revelation and the history of mankind prove. The whole seal dispensation, evidently operated during the time the church was under the persecution of paganism. And when the empire became professed by christian, the trumpet dispensation began. And here commenced the persecution of the church, upon a totally distinct ground. Heresies so many and so various arose, that not a few might have been called nondescript: for the very partisans of several, though classed under one and the same name, yet when their tenets came to be analysed, became broken into different fragments. Thus the shades of such as denied the Godhead of Christ were variously coloured, so that no uniformity connected the whole. Praxeas seems to have been among the first that called in question those divine truths, which were afterwards ascribed to Sabellius; but when once a departure is made from the simple and strait line of truth, the aberration becomes

endless. I can neither follow commentators, who have taken in too much history of the world with the church to give consistency to their opinions; neither can I go after those who very lavishly date the different heresies according to their own view of the precise period when the seven trumpets followed each other. It is enough to know, until the whole comes to be unravelled by the Lord, that the trumpet dispensation hath reached unto the present time; that it will reach unto the very end of time, when the seventh and last trumpet will bring forward those events which declare the complete triumph of Christ's kingdom, Rev. xi. 15. The watchfulness of the Lord's people, is therefore the great instruction held forth under all, that no surprize may overtake them, while the Lord is accomplishing his sovereign purpose, in his own way and according to his own holy will in all things. I shall only add for the present, that as I before observed, Christ, the mighty angel, appearing at the altar of incense before the trumpet dispensation, becomes a guarantee in all ages to the church, that he will appear for his people, before all dispensations of trial whatever they may be, to bear them up, and bear them on through all their exercises. So what is said of "the angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God," who commanded the restraining of the winds "neither to blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree, until he had sealed the servants of God on the forehead:" this becomes an additional testimony of the everlasting safety of the Lord's people. The church of God in the most troubled times, is as safe on earth as the church in heaven. The church is sealed "unto the day of eternal redemption. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Tim. ii. 19. Very blessedly did the church ages ago express her confidence in this. And very blessedly may the church do the same now. "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord

hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Isa. xliv. 23.

In prosecuting a few detached thoughts, on this mysterious book of God, it was only proposed to consider some of the more prominent parts, as belonging to the vision of the seals, and the trumpets, and the vials and particularly with an eye to the present advanced day of the church. By watching as far as divine lights gives ability, to the Lord's dispensations, during the ministry of those several epochs in what is passed and unfolded, we are the better qualified to wait and mark under the same heavenly direction, for what is to come. And as so long a period hath run out, from the days of the apostles, to this nineteenth century of the church; in an humble and patient looking over this sacred scripture, we may hope for the Lord's favour, in the fulfilment of the Lord's promises; "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of his prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein."

We have gone over, though in a very cursory manner, our view of the vision of the seals, and of the trumpets. Our present attention will be to that of the vials. The beloved apostle hath introduced the subject, in the 15th chapter, by way of prelude to the events themselves; the relation of which follow in the 16th chapter. It appears that the mind of the hoary servant of the Lord was struck with consternation at what he saw; for he introduceth the subject with expressions to that amount: "And I saw (said John) another sign in heaven, great and marvellous; seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled the wrath of God. And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass, mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on

the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

We shall do right to pause here, and observe, under the Lord's teachings, how very attentive the Lord is to his people, in the moment when he is going forth in judgment to the ungodly. Here John is brought into a vision, to have these things unfolded for the church. And God the Holy Ghost watching over his church, hath preserved the relation, and caused it to be handed down in safety, to the present hour. John calls it "a sign, great and marvellous!" And great and marvellous indeed it is, to behold the safety of the church, when God ariseth to take vengeance on their enemies. Hence the scene is exhibited of "a sea of glass mingled with fire;" to intimate the Lord's mercy to his people, mingled up in the midst of the fiery indignation of the Lord to his enemies all around. The redeemed of the Lord, who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, are represented, as standing firm and secure, while beholding the destruction of the ungodly falling on every side. And so composed and tranquil their state, that as Moses at the Red Sea, beholding the destruction of Pharoah and his host, sung the song of salvation, in Israel passing through, a typical representation of Christ's blood; so the church now and at the final overthrow of sin, and Satan, sing salvation to God and the Lamb! Distinguishing mercies have a ten-fold sweetness in them. And the language of every redeemed, and regenerated child of God is, when in the midst of desolations he findeth peace: "Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John xiv. 22.)

The man of God having thus prepared the church for the expectation of the great and marvellous events which were to follow, under the dispensation of the vials, which he calleth "the seven last plagues;" and having shewn

how the Lord had made provision for the church, during these tremendous visitations, next proceeds to introduce the awful ministers, whom the Lord had appointed for this purpose. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, go your way, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." (Rev. xvi. 1, 2.) I stay not to inquire, much less to say, at what period of the church this first vial was poured out. But I would pause to observe, what a beautiful connection there is, in holy scripture, in all ages of the church, in proof that the whole was written by the several penmen under the same Almighty inspiration. When the Lord would shew his servant, the prophet Ezekiel, the awful state of things in his days, it was done as here, by John in vision. The destruction then began at the sanctuary, as in John's vision, from the temple: plainly intimating, that in both there are false professors, as well as the openly profane. But then, as now, the "Lord knoweth them that are his!" In Ezekiel's vision, the chosen were marked in their foreheads, concerning whom to the destroying angels, the order was given; "Come not near any man upon whom is the mark." (Ezek. ix. 6.) In this vision of John, the angel poured out the vial of wrath upon the men which had "the mark of the beast." And what doth the ministry upon both occasions say, but one and the same divine truth as stated by the prophet; "say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him." (Isaiah iii. 10, 11.)

I do not mean to follow any commentator, upon the subject of the diversity, both on the places where the several vials were poured out, and the different *effects*

when, which were produced by them. This would extend the subject much beyond the limits on the present occasion to be observed. And indeed, so many and so various have been their views of them, that scarce any two of them are agreed. And after all, they are wholly conjectural. It will be more to the profit of the *spiritual* reader, to take the whole into one aggregate, and rather to make observations under divine teaching, on such things belonging to them as tend to edify, than such as though might be amusing, would be unprofitable. That all the dispensations delivered in this mysterious book of God, are prophetical, and had reference to the events which were to follow in the church, from the apostle's days to the consummation of all things, whether by vision or otherwise, there can be no question. Hence, therefore, under this apprehension, and which is truly scriptural, that the spiritually taught child of God may be included in that promise of being blessed in *reading* or *hearing* the words of this prophecy, and keep (that is, lay up in mind) under the divine unction of the Spirit, *what are written therein;* our improvement of this cursory view of the *seals*, *trumpets*, and *vials*, will be, in the retrospect of the past, and which have been accomplished; to consider by comparative statement what are yet for to come; and in the solemn contemplation of both, to be always on the watch-tower, attending to the gracious words of our most glorious Christ, and with which he closed each writing sent by John to the seven churches; "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

And here one general observation meets us on the subject of the whole, namely, that though according to the order of holy scripture, the ministry of the *trumpets* are not noticed until that of the *seals* had been completely related; neither this of the *vials*, until the pro-

phecy of the *trumpets* had been rehearsed in order; yet certain it is, that neither hath the *seal* dispensation or the trumpet been fully accomplished to the present hour, no more than the pouring out the whole of the seven *vials*. True it is indeed that the *vials* are called the *last* plagues, and in a way of judgment upon the enemies of our most glorious Christ, will be among the last events to be accomplished before the final consummation of all things: but it is equally clear, that among the last, perhaps the very last, will be the sounding of the *seventh trumpet*, from the events which are then said to follow.

And let me add another observation, for in my view it is not only most important, but very sweet and interesting; namely, the spiritual church of Christ in the present day by a comparative statement, with the generations gone before, can plainly discover that the ministry of the whole of *seals*, and *trumpets*, and *vials*, are sometimes so blended and combined together, that in the one we see the illustration of the other; and the whole unitedly corresponding to shew, "Christ the wisdom of God, and Christ the power of God (in every dispensation) to every one that believeth."

And those observations if correct, (and I can see no possibility of their being otherwise) will serve to throw such a light upon the whole, in the dispensations of all the remaining to be fulfilled, of *seals*, and *trumpets*, and *vials*, as under the unction of the Spirit, will act as a clue to lead to the discovery of the events, which in the present hour are probably drawing nigh, and to be expected in due order in their accomplishment. More than these are unlikely to be developed, but as in their arrival will explain themselves. To every question concerning *time* and *manner*, if we would ask with Daniel, "O my Lord! when and what shall be the end of these things?" We may well conclude, the

answer he had will be ours, "Go thy way, for the words are closed up and sealed, till the time of the end." Dan. xii. 8, 9.

Upon the whole then, whether we consider the mystery of the *seals*, of the *trumpets*, or of the *vials*, all are as so many beacons designed for light to the Lord's church and people. All are preludes and harbingers of the great day of God. And as the church now in the present hour is arrived at that period upon whom the ends of the world are come, our wisdom will be to wait the Lord's coming by those signs which will usher in his approach. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. The mystery of God shall be finished." And then will be heard fully the burst of praise, when it will be said, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"

END OF VOLUME IX.

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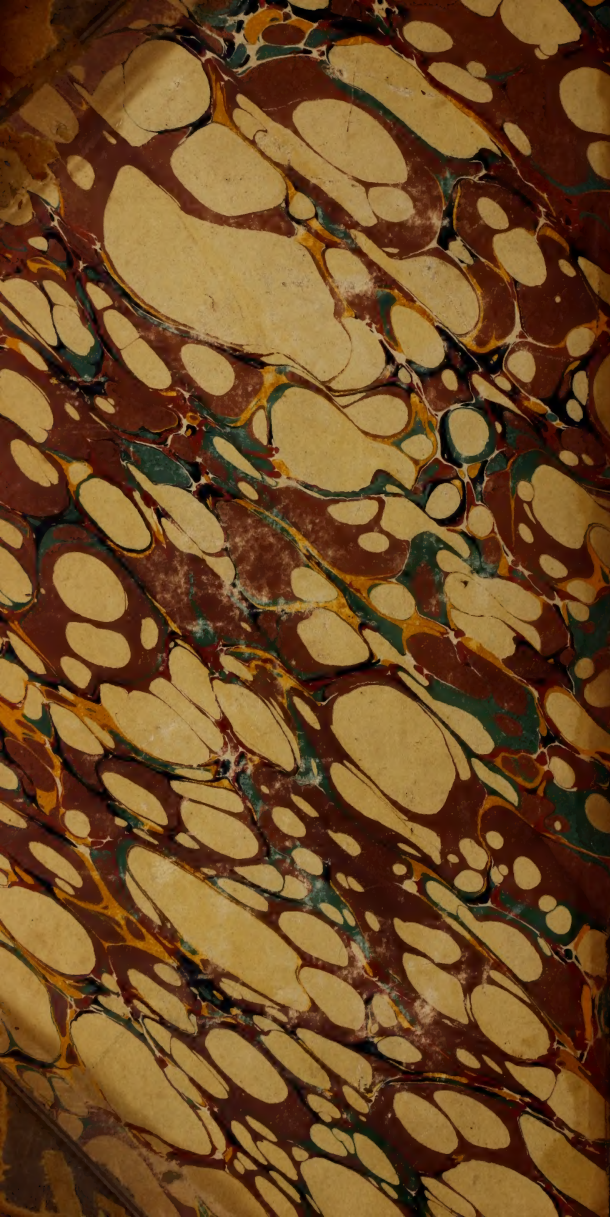
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